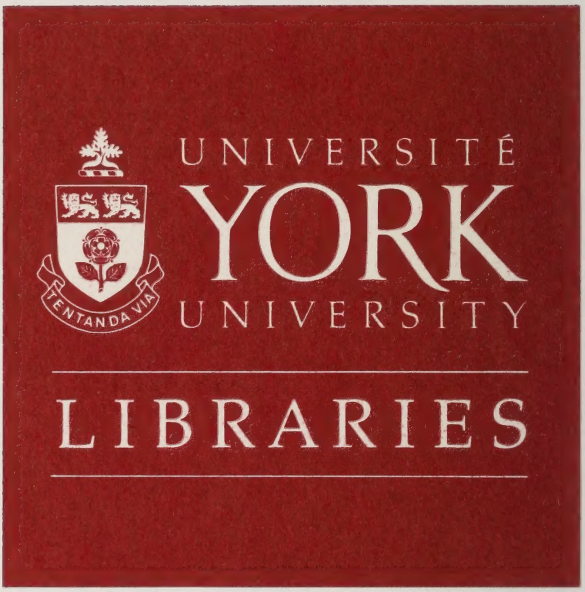
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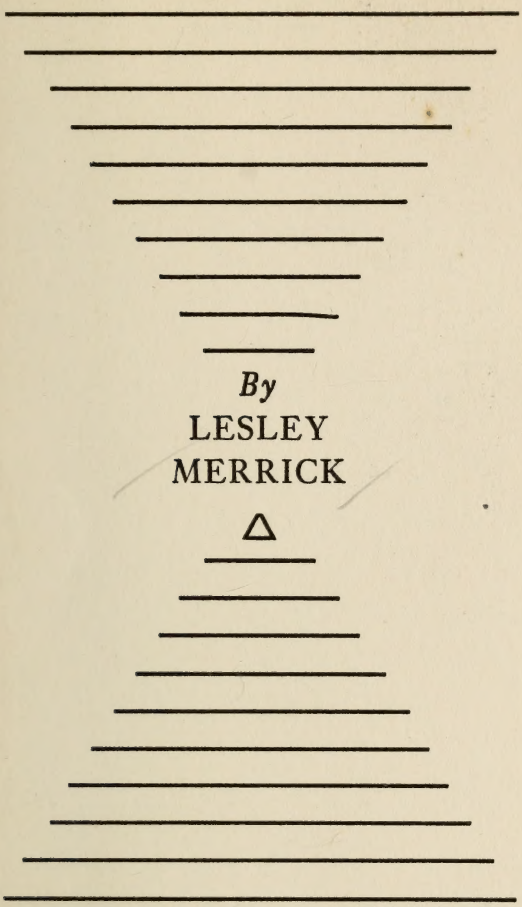

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FIRST EDITION

TO THE MEMORY OF

MY MOTHER

GRATEFULLY

A Good Time

CHAPTER

I

THE MOST exciting time to arrive is in the evening. A few dim streets near the docks, then New York bursts upon you in a great dazzle of light.

Driving up Broadway, that very sophisticated thoroughfare, I yet felt I was entering a magic city. Those monster buildings, vaguely seen, appear to rise to fantastic heights, their tier upon tier of brilliant windows seem mounting to the moon. Surely, too, those electric signs winking among the stars, must be the lamps of fairyland?

Soon, however, you come down to earth. You suspect some of those signs of winking at their own fine words, and by the morning your skyscrapers have lost their mystery, and become merely modern.

But, even so, New York is amazing. Such vitality everywhere. Sunshine dancing on the Hudson,

and grim Wall Street where you imagine you hear a mutter of frenzy. Alert crowds, and cars straining at the leash. Exhilaration is in the air, and you quicken your steps instinctively.

This eager way of living keeps people at concert pitch. Many women in New York fancy they are wasting time if there is a blank hour in their engagement book. Often I pleaded a full day in refusing an invitation, but the lady invariably discovered a few spare minutes which I had overlooked. "Say, you could come to me between this and that," or, "on your way from here to there," as the case might be. And I found that I always could, and did.

For visitors used to the quieter ways of England, this kind of thing proves very tiring. They enjoy it at first, but eventually feel the strain. Then they return home with the usual tale of "feverish and hectic New York."

Yet few Americans whom you meet ever seem to flag, and the majority of them are neither feverish in manner, nor are they hectic in their private lives. Their days may be swift but their nights are normal.

Also it *is* possible to keep still in New York, if

you try hard. My friends there included literary men and women, and I often asked them how they found time to think—still more how they found time to write. Some, among them Fannie Hurst and Kathleen Norris, vowed they could imagine no more inspiring place in which to write. Since then, however, Charles and Kathleen Norris have moved to California where, manifestly, they are finding equal inspiration.

As my father and I stood looking from the window on our first evening in New York we saw, far below, cars flashing like fireflies, and tiny figures fleeting along. High on all sides, like shining towers, rose many lighted buildings. We heard the distant thunder of the Elevated, and in the room behind us the radiator clicked. Turning, we poured out some ice water, and gaily we drank to the wonderful city.

As we did so, suddenly, deliriously, I felt all the intoxication of New York by night—felt I was beginning a great adventure, face to face with novelty, and with everything ahead.

Recklessly, with a swagger, I tossed off a second glass.

CHAPTER

II

EVERY DAY in New York began with a rush. One of my clearest memories of that time is the noise of the telephone bell. I awoke to its shrewish clamour, and while I sleepily agreed to be at the other end of the city in about an hour's time, shrill peals from my father's room would announce a luncheon appointment. And often, before we had finished speaking, the bell in our sitting-room rang hysterically, and there was a wild, barefoot dash to accept still another invitation. It was all so typical of New York: three telephones sounding in simultaneous hospitality early in the morning.

After that excitement came the joy of a private bathroom—not a luxury, but a matter of course in any good hotel in the United States. The joy, however, was always rather marred by the dwarfish dimensions of the bath itself. Babbitt may have had "a tub long enough for a Prussian Guard," but

all those I saw seemed expressly made for Bantams. You were safe in them as far as your knees; below that you hit the taps.

Then breakfast upstairs—which didn't mean a loaded tray, with knives firmly wedged under plates, and the cruet and the toast-rack entangled. The order given, a waiter would soon be heard wheeling a trolley. After he had carefully laid the table, there appeared, brimming with juice, some cool and golden grapefruit. The waiter next entered carrying an oven; a tall, imposing oven. From this he brought forth gorgeously hot coffee and rolls and bacon, and perhaps porridge and crumbly buckwheat cakes.

Such dainty dishes as corned-beef hash, grilled chops, or steak with a couple of fried eggs over it, were also quite usual on the menu, though we never tackled them. But I found that if I said casually "a boiled egg, please," I was invariably given two, in a glass, beaten into a warm and glutinous mess. In New York, no doubt, an egg in its shell looks as primitive as would a pudding served in the basin in which it was cooked.

But the clock ticks, the rush continues. You haven't far to go, but decide to take a bus. It is

your first bus in New York, and you feel quite proud at having hailed the right one. Then the conductor comes. You offer him money, more than the price of your ticket, and he returns you the whole amount in smaller coin. Slightly bewildered, you hand him the exact fare this time. He doesn't move. Smiling anxiously, you repeat the name of your destination. You jerk the money at him. Still he doesn't move. Then you notice that he is holding some metal contrivance that looks horribly complicated. Glaring desperately, you discover a small slot; for what seems ages it eludes you, but at last, with fumbling fingers, you force in your coin. Suddenly the conductor comes to life—he deigns to move his thumb—and with a click, your dime falls into the little machine. After that, you stare unseeingly through the window, feeling very much of a foreigner, and still more of a fool.

But, in our experience, that feeling cannot last for long in America. Nearly always, the very fact that a man is a stranger seems to make the merest acquaintance ready to be his friend. A first meeting will almost certainly end in an invitation; not a perfunctory one, but sincere. Invitations also came to us from distant cities and quite small towns—not

merely from literary societies and authors, but from private citizens whom we did not know, but who knew my father's books. Would we go and stay with them in their homes?

Indeed, I have nothing but grateful memories of my trip to New York, from that day on the *Scythia* when my father received a wireless from his publishers, "Welcome to America," to the evening when a small crowd had assembled to see us off, and we found our sections on the train half filled with flowers and farewell gifts.

While in New York we used occasionally to call on business men in their offices, and each time I had a pleasant surprise. I had expected to find them working in an atmosphere of hustle, and able to spare us only a few hurried words. But instead they welcomed us as if we were the sole visitors of the day. Smilingly offering chairs and cigarettes, they might have been receiving us in their own homes, and on a holiday at that. Yet there was nothing indolent in their manner; rather an alert attention to the passing moment that made the caller feel himself important. Often the telephone rang or a clerk came to the door, but after each interruption our host would turn to us with an air of relief, as though

saying: "Now I can get back to what interests me most." American business men know how to combine pep with politeness.

We received just as much cordiality from the Press of America. We had heard rather alarming accounts of American interviewers, but we found them courtesy itself. My father never saw a single proof of an interview, yet in the very many that appeared there was never a line, I think, to which he could take exception. At its best, interviewing in America has been elevated to an art. In the big bundle of Press cuttings and portraits that I preserved there are interviews by Miss Rose C. Feld in the *New York Times*, and by Mr. James Walter Smith in the *Boston Transcript* that are really character studies. Miss Feld's method of interviewing appealed to me strongly. She never took a note and never appeared to ask a question, yet in all the interviews by her that I have read, whether they were with literary men, or scientists, or politicians, or any other sort of celebrity, I seemed to hear the man himself talking.

When I was taken for my first drive round New York I remember that I was stupidly resolved not to look unduly impressed by what I saw, for I had

been told that Americans "showed off." I expected to be asked if I had ever seen anything comparable to the fashions of Fifth Avenue, or to the marvel of Manhattan as a whole. But throughout the afternoon my friends were merely as quietly informative as English people taking a stranger to see the Abbey or St. Paul's. We all enjoyed the outing, without any vainglory on their part, or forced compliments on mine. And it was like that every time I went sightseeing in America.

It was on the day I went to the office of the Vice President of the Singer Manufacturing Company that I realized to the full the gigantic height of many of New York's buildings. Looking down from its array of windows I saw taxis gliding along like little toys, and on the river Atlantic liners seemed very small and helpless.

Another day I travelled to the top of the Woolworth Building by two elevators. The first climbed so high that it seemed hard luck on it always having to stop just short of its goal. The second took the last few storeys at a bound, and landed me on the fifty-fifth floor with a flourish, as though it had done all the work.

From the summit of the Tower I looked down upon New York. Skyscrapers had dwindled, and domes lay below me like toadstools. Seen from above, gargoyles were no longer fierce, but stared foolishly, with vacant mouths. A bird flew on to the wall beside me, and for a time we stood there gazing at the city together.

One of the best things I saw in New York was the interior of the Grand Central Station. Never before had I seen a beautiful railway station, nor even realized that such a thing was possible. As I looked down into the vast hall, and then up towards the distant roof, I felt as though I had entered a Cathedral. In spite of the hurrying crowds there was the same grandeur, the same passionless beauty and peace. One would not have been surprised to hear hymns of praise ascending, and an organ peal exultantly.

There was not a train to be seen, nor the smallest puff of smoke. That is because, for several miles, all trains are operated by electricity, and the platforms are hidden away at the end of long passages. On the ground floor I saw an Arcade full of fascinating shops, brilliantly lit; and in a gallery were

models and pictures of trains, from one of the first that ever ran out of New York, down to the very latest.

As I mounted the steps again on my way out, I turned for a last look. People were still hurrying on their various little ways, while the station rose about them, dignified and aloof.

CHAPTER

III

MANY WERE the interesting evenings we passed in New York, and one of the best was that spent with Mr. Daniel Frohman.

My father and I dined with him in his apartment at the top of the Lyceum Theatre. Charles and Kathleen Norris were there, and Fannie Hurst, and I knew that I was lucky to be there with them.

We began, as at every dinner we went to in America, with cocktails and delicious little sandwiches. These sandwiches were usually made of caviar, piping-hot melted cheese, or *foie gras*. After we had looked at a wonderful collection of souvenirs from celebrities in different parts of the world, dinner was served by the Negro who, Mr. Frohman said, had also cooked it single-handed.

I remember that during dinner Mrs. Norris entertained us all with stories of her girlhood in Ireland. Looking back, I can still feel the spell she

cast over the six people gathered round that table. While she told her witty stories they hung upon every word, and they had eyes for nothing but the handsome face breaking into humorous smiles.

Mr. Frohman happened to mention that throughout most of the year he slept outside on the balcony. Immediately, we all left our dessert and went to look at it. There it was, perched high among turrets and towers. But he told us that when he first came to that apartment at the top of the theatre, there were no skyscrapers near, and the view was magnificent. At night, on his balcony, he must have felt like an eagle alone in his eyrie.

After dinner he sprang a surprise on us. Beckoning mysteriously, he led us across the room to some armchairs facing the wall. He then switched off all the lights, tiptoed back again, and suddenly slid open a small panel in the wall. There, far away, as at the bottom of a dark well, lay a bright miniature stage, with little figures upon it. From a great height above the gallery, we were gazing sheer down into the Lyceum Theatre; and this peep-hole, giving us a concentrated view of the stage, made the tiny actors stand out vividly. Their voices floated up to us, distant but clear.

In this way, Mr. Frohman can observe a performance without rendering the company nervous by his presence. Later on, however, he took us down to a box, and we watched the rest of the play at closer range.

After driving us back to our hotel, Miss Fannie Hurst came in and talked to us, and that talk made the climax to the evening. Whenever I think of Miss Hurst I picture her as I saw her then: at the window of our sitting-room, a figure in scarlet, the smooth dark head outlined against the lights of New York.

We had many such unforgettable evenings and, as guests, Prohibition, which was then still in force, did not affect us, for everywhere that we were invited, wine was plentiful and good. At one luncheon a Madeira was served which had been in the cellar of our hostess's grandfather. A wonderful wine which lay against your lips, sweet and smooth and tempting!

But not many people possessed such treasures. Most of them had what they called "reliable" bootleggers. It was quite usual to hear a man remark: "I have an excellent bootlegger," as naturally as he might say: "I have an excellent dentist." But as

nearly everyone we met told us the most terrifying tales of the dire effects of drinking illicit alcohol, prudence kept us within the law.

When we were in New York, alcohol could only be obtained legitimately if wanted for medicinal purposes; and then the difficulties were tremendous. The patient had first to get a prescription for it from a doctor. After paying him his fee, he proceeded to a drug store where, for two dollars and a half, they would give him a small flask of brandy or whisky—about the third of the size of any ordinary bottle. The contents had been analyzed as pure, and he knew he could drink it without fear. But the expensive prescription could only be used once, so that every bottle meant a fresh visit to a doctor.

Even then it was not always plain sailing, for each doctor was only allowed to prescribe a certain amount of alcohol per month, and sometimes one patient would have to go short for the sake of another. So it was no use pretending to stand in dire need of brandy when you could very well do without it. If the doctor was not convinced that your need was genuine, he would remain adamant. In

fact, I was told that some medical men in New York would no longer apply for permission to prescribe alcohol, as they found they wasted too much time in refusing healthy people who pestered them for prescriptions.

Having got as far as the drug store, the patient would sometimes be faced with more obstacles. For there also the quantity of alcohol allowed was limited, and occasionally supplies ran out. I heard of at least one authentic case of a woman in some town who was dying because no brandy could be bought, though three doctors had ordered it.

Prohibition worried us only when we tried to return hospitality. But, knowing the difficulties that beset us, our guests would often arrive with thermos flasks tucked under their arms and, beaming upon us, they would unscrew the tops and pour out Manhattans or Martinis.

When by chance we had a free evening, my father and I would wander out together in quest of adventure. At least, I called it adventure, though he used to say that he merely wanted a good dinner and a harmless bottle of wine. But that harmless bottle, or even a half, was at that time only

obtainable after many precautions and as much mystery as if we were taking part in a detective play.

For instance, we once went to a house the address of which had been given us by a friend. Descending into the pitch black area, we pulled a jangling bell. Steps approached, and through a lattice peered a face, demanding who we were. Instead of our name we gave a password, and heard a clanking of heavy chains and the grating of a key. The door was opened a few inches and we crept into a dim and narrow hall. A hoarse voice muttered: "Come this way," and silently we followed the face up the stairs. In the darkness ahead a light glimmered through the chink of a half-closed door. Another moment, and we stood upon the threshold. The room was feebly lit and the windows heavily shuttered. There we beheld, not a band of conspirators, but about a dozen eminently respectable citizens soberly eating their dinner. With it they were drinking what proved to be a poor, but innocuous, wine.

As we were leaving, a woman appeared out of the shadows in the hall and, clasping her hands, implored us not to mention to a soul that we had seen

any wine on the premises. In low tones she warned us that some men were prowling about outside, spying upon the house; that they might question us as to what we had drunk during dinner, and then sell the information to the police.

To the very end the air of secrecy had been well kept up, and it was almost a disappointment to see no sign of those ruffians in the street.

Many people, especially very young ones, enjoyed all these elaborate precautions, and were willing to pay well for them. Others found it ridiculous never to be able to dine out simply, ordering wine as a matter of course. Obviously, those houses were not in such danger as they pretended to be, for one often saw a policeman sauntering up and down near by, yet never attempting to stop any of the cars that drove up to the door.

One evening, not knowing this, we arrived on foot at such a house, but seeing a policeman, we walked unconcernedly past. Right to the end of the road we walked, then back again, with innocent faces. Up and down many blocks we plodded, hungry and weary, till we thought it safe to return. The policeman was still there, but our hunger was now so great that, desperately, we dived into the

area, and uttered the precious password. How that good man must have enjoyed our efforts to deceive him!

On another occasion, just as we were stepping into a taxi, we forgot the full address of the house we wished to try. Naming only the street, we hesitated, then: "Number 178?" asked the driver casually. He knew.

The only time I remember our procuring wine with comparative ease was when we least expected it. We were dining in an ordinary restaurant, and drinking ice water, which is very plentiful everywhere in America. Too plentiful, in fact, for a waiter is always hovering in the background, eager to dash more water into your tumbler. You have no sooner taken a sip then he springs forward, whips up the jug with a flourish, and fills up your glass to the brim.

On this particular evening, about half way through dinner, I saw my father's eyes begin to twinkle, and guessed what was coming.

"We can't get any wine here," I said, "it's much too public a place. Why, the police can see in from the street."

That, of course, decided my father. He imme-

diately called a waiter. In a very few minutes the man came back, closely hugging a bottle hidden under his coat. It was not a bad wine, though we had to drink it out of tumblers, and secrete it under the table.

One night in the restaurant of a well-known hotel I saw a party of about thirty women dining together. They probably belonged to some club or Society, and before Prohibition, and since, would no doubt have been content with ginger ale. But now they had wine, and the floor under their long table was littered with bottles. Most of the women had become slightly intoxicated, and they were not pretty to watch, with their red faces and violent laughter.

Sometimes my father and I would wander into one of the many small restaurants that are scattered about New York. They are generally good, and some have rather a quaint air, being sunk below the level of the pavement, or perhaps having a tiny courtyard in front. With their shrubs and their dainty windows, they often make a charming picture in an otherwise monotonous street.

Among them are several French places, and as you enter one of these you walk straight into a lit-

tle France. The whole atmosphere is genuine, in spite of the ice water on the tables. Around you are foreign faces, gestures and phrases—though it is really you who are now the foreigner, for these people are at home. They enter the room as American citizens, but by the time they have hung up their hats they are Frenchmen. They order *blanquette de veau* or *boeuf à la mode*, and their talk is of the boulevards, though Broadway lies close by.

Yes, we have had some captivating times exploring New York by ourselves. But most of our evenings were passed with people in their own homes, which was, after all, the best way of getting to know Americans. One of the reasons why most tourists misunderstand the countries they visit is that they see so many hotels and restaurants, and so few homes. To judge New York only by its crowds would be like trying to read the soul of Mr. Selfridge in his shop windows.

Though most New Yorkers have to live in flats instead of houses, the feeling of home is there nevertheless. By the way, you soon learn not to speak of flats in America. A flat there means something very small, anything large is an apartment, even when it consists of two or three floors. I can still remem-

ber the astonished look I caused as I stood in the centre of a spacious drawing-room on Park Avenue, with other spacious rooms above me, and told my hostess what a nice "flat" she had!

One of the pleasantest private houses that I saw in New York belonged to the late Miss Elisabeth Marbury. It stood, little but exquisite, overlooking the drama of the East River.

Every evening had its own particular attraction. There was that memorable one with the late Mr. Augustus Thomas and Mrs. Thomas who, after dinner at their apartment took us, by our own choice, to see a real "hobo" play. It was remarkable, but I enjoyed most listening to Mr. Thomas's reminiscences during the *entr'actes*. My father, by the way, found some of the lines in the piece the most startling he had ever heard uttered in English on any stage!

Then there were those informal Sunday supper parties at Mr. Owen Johnson's, where young people would laugh and sing and play the piano, and he would be as gay as were his guests from Yale. Sometimes, after vanishing into the kitchen, he would reappear bearing some savoury he had himself cooked for us. There was also the dinner in a Park

Avenue apartment during which the velvet curtains at the end of the room suddenly parted, and several coloured musicians in fancy costume stalked in and began prancing round the table, playing flutes and violins.

It was at a large ball at the Ritz-Carlton that I first made the acquaintance of the "cutting in" system. Strangely enough, though I had heard of the custom I had forgotten all about it, and I was therefore rather staggered to see my partner tapped on the shoulder, and to find myself surrendered without a murmur to the arms of another. And this, not once, but several times during the course of a single dance. However, I was soon enjoying the fun and variety of it all. Looking round at the superabundance of men in that ballroom I thought compassionately of the girls I knew in England who were seldom invited to a dance unless they could "bring a man." I remembered my own frantic telephoning in search of a partner who might be free for a particular evening, and I also remembered the many bores I had suffered gladly for the sweet sake of Jazz. And I thought, "give me New York!"

CHAPTER IV

WHEN I LEFT for the United States my mind was full of clichés concerning America. They were chiefly picked up from other English people who had never been there, but who had met a few tourists whom they disliked. I thought Americans would swank, and boost "God's own country." I expected to find them worshipping "the almighty dollar," and to be told that "America won the War."

Not once, however, during my three months' stay in the States, did I hear an American claim that his country won the War; nor did I hear one word to which an Englishman could reasonably take exception.

It was not only literary men and women whom we met, but also nice, ordinary business men and their families, who entertained us warmly and without affectation. Their affluence was never flaunted; it played its part quite unobtrusively.

I soon discovered something else about American business men: most of those whom we met showed a genuine admiration for good books. When the conversation turned on literature, the man who spent his days dealing with investments or manufactures, would usually be able to talk fluently about the best writers—not only those of America, but of England too. And occasionally he would take down a classic from his bookcase and, handling it tenderly, point out that it was a first edition; or he would turn proudly to the error of some bygone printer that made the volume almost unique.

We found an appreciation of books in the most unexpected places. In a department store that we had entered I noticed that the girl who served me kept looking at my father. Lots of the papers had published portraits of him, and I could see she recognised him.

Just as we were leaving she burst out, "Oh, Mr. Merrick, it has been such a thrill to meet you! It was through your books I went to Paris." My father looked very uncomfortable under this responsibility suddenly thrust upon him, and enquired nervously whether she had been disappointed. "Disappointed?" she echoed. "Why, it's my dream

to go back there one day to *live*." He asked her if she would like him to give her a copy of one of his books, and which one he should choose. "Oh, Mr. Merrick," she said promptly, "your best!" And she named the one that my father himself has always considered his best, though only the most literary of his critics have agreed with him.

Another thing happened when we paid our first visit to the publishers, E. P. Dutton and Company. While we were talking to the President, Mr. John Macrae—who, by the way, is almost as much at home in London as in New York—I noticed that a boy kept coming into the office laden with copies of my father's books. Stack after stack was piled upon a table till at last I asked the reason. It appeared that they belonged to employés who had bought them for their own homes and who, on hearing that the author was expected that day, had brought them to the office in the hope that he would consent to autograph them.

At the end of this visit Mr. Henry C. Smith, himself a wonderfully good amateur actor, took us to the Comedy Club, which is the headquarters of a dramatic society. It is a fascinating place, a little theatre complete in every detail, even to a small

workshop in which everything connected with the productions is made by the members themselves. It was also he who took my father to lunch at the Dutch Treat Club, where they decorated him with the Club's emblem—a plaque, as large as a muffin, representing a Dutchman smoking a pipe.

Soon after our arrival a great many literary men, and other distinguished people, gave a dinner of welcome to my father at the Coffee House Club, and it was a terribly nervous evening for me, as I knew how he dreaded having to make a speech. However, the speech was very much of a success, not only at the Club but right through the United States, for he was asked to repeat it later on the radio.

Of women's clubs, the Pen and Brush is the one I know best. In its unpretentious rooms gather some of New York's cleverest women, and it was there I met Miss Ida Tarbell, its President, and Miss Louise Maunsell Field. I well remember my first journey to the club, for it was during the drive there that I realised how comparatively easy life is for the pedestrian in New York. I sat in that car for an hour and a half; taking five minutes to go two blocks, we were held up for the same length of

time at every second corner. In all the busy streets we were forced to go at a snail's pace, with frequent stops, while people streamed across the road at their ease.

However, it was that same afternoon that I discovered a new beauty in Fifth Avenue. I had seen her in the mornings, looking clean and bright and wide awake; and in the evening, when the myriad coloured lamps glow like jewels on her breast. But this was the hour of sunset and the Avenue lay in negligée. In the soft light it seemed that her face grew gentle, and her form relaxed.

After my visit to the Pen and Brush Club I realised that it is not only in social activities that American women pass their time. No matter how well off they may be, most of them take up some occupation. Interior decorating is a very favourite hobby with them. Many wealthy girls even obtain jobs as saleswomen, which shows a certain amount of pluck even if, in some cases, they do go to work in chinchilla coats and after a time the job is abandoned.

One of the things that impressed me most about the women in New York was their conversation. They appeared able to discuss anything, from pol-

itics to poetry, from religion to lipsticks. Whenever I remarked on this fact to a man he generally said that this intellectuality was only superficial, a mere smattering of culture. Be that as it may, the fact remains that American women are delightful to talk to. Even if it is true that they cannot go deeply into any subject, which I take leave to doubt, they skim the surfaces very nimbly. If you can't have a full-course dinner, it is surely something to be offered *hors d'oeuvres variés.*

Which reminds me that I always felt there was something Gallic about the women of New York. They have a great deal of the French vivacity, and there is the same fascination in their quick intelligence.

It is good to be a woman in the United States. Of all the reports about that country so firmly believed in England, the freedom of American women is one of the few that happens to be true. They are free without being defiant, for they no longer have need for defiance. They have power, and they know it, and it is this that gives them their unique self-confidence. Some of the husbands say that the women have too much power; that they are beginning to

rule the men, and that one day the tables will be turned.

Yet there are some people who still think there is room for improvement, judging by a lecture which I heard. The occasion was a dinner at the Hotel Broztell, given by a society calling itself "The Morans," and it was attended by almost as many men as women. The lecture, which was followed by an earnest discussion, was entitled "Social Barriers to Woman's Freedom," and the barriers appeared to be enormous.

In spite of this, however, I repeat that it is good to be a woman in the United States. After being there only a few days, I had the most exhilarating feeling that I could do whatever I liked with impunity. As a man once remarked to me: "A girl here can get away with anything." I felt that I had only to do and dare, and the world was mine.

CHAPTER

V

A VERY INTERESTING world it was, too. Of course I did the usual sightseeing, drove along Riverside Drive, and visited the museums. It was in the Metropolitan Museum that I heard the following dialogue:

Child (standing before a picture of two ladies taking a stroll in transparent apparel):

"Auntie, why have they got so little on, and where are they going?"

Auntie (sternly): "I guess they are going to hell, dear."

But it was the more unusual places that interested me most, such as the little Roerich Museum, where the deep beauty of the pictures seems to fill the whole place with peace.

Then there was International House where young men and girls from all countries stay, while studying at the various colleges. In its charming

rooms one may see French and German, Russian, Japanese and coloured students chatting together. Would there were more such centres where young people of all nations could meet and exchange ideas, eventually returning to their own countries with fewer prejudices about the rest of the world.

Another place that I liked very much was the Heckscher Building where there were among other things a charming children's theatre, a gymnasium and a swimming pool. On Sundays, when it was closed to the public, I would occasionally go there with some friends who had a special pass and, changing into bathing costumes, we would spend an hour in the gymnasium before making our way to the cool green water.

The next week was Christmas, and Christmas Day itself began with a visit from Mr. John Macrae, bearing a bouquet of exquisite roses. Never shall I forget that time in New York. The windows of the stores, so perfectly dressed and artistically lighted, and in the windows of the houses garlands of evergreen hanging, with their huge bows of scarlet ribbon. Best of all, in open spaces stood tall Christmas trees, sparkling all over with coloured

lamps. Under Washington Arch a kingly tree blazed magnificently in the dark Square.

Only a month before we had had Thanksgiving, and I discovered then that turkeys were very plentiful in America. I ate turkey at every luncheon and dinner for a week. When Christmas came, however, I found that chicken was once again the favourite dish. It is Foch who is supposed to have said on leaving New York: "*Enfin, plus de poulet!*" Personally, I never reached that state of satiety, but appreciated American cooking immensely. It amused me, however, to be asked more than once: "Have you got turkeys in England?"

When speaking of a city one naturally mentions most often the quarters that one knows best, the shopping and residential parts. But no city has a greater variety of districts than New York, from Washington Heights where one breathes freely far above buses and trains, down to the Bowery where one sees Chinese and Yiddish theatres, and billboards printed in puzzling characters. Travelling downtown on the Elevated, one comes eventually to streets of tenements, six and seven stories high. At the sight of these I once heard an American girl,

used to skyscrapers all her life, exclaim: "Say, look at those quaint little houses!"

The Yiddish quarter itself is full of interest. Here, among a jostling, poorly-clad throng, one pushes one's way along pavements crowded with stalls. The houses are half hidden by clouds of washing lowering from the windows; old men in Astrakhan caps sit huddled upon doorsteps, and children play with the trampled refuse in the road. Allen Street, near by, is of a different type, with vivid crimson quilts hanging outside the quilt-makers, and the brass and copper in its little shops gleaming in the dusk of the Elevated.

There are also the Greek and Syrian districts, each having its own individuality, but of them all Chinatown struck me as the cleanest. No litter on the pavements, and the shops though dark are tidy. There was a dignity about Chinatown that I found in none of the other foreign quarters. Some of its narrow, twisting streets are very silent, and through open doors you catch sight of men at work. Glancing curiously into those dim interiors, you receive an impression of secrecy, of family life proudly hidden from the eyes of strangers—and you pass on, wishing you had not pried.

Though New York is always interesting, it is by night that I remember her best. However familiar with her I had become by day, at night she was always the wonder-city. Evening after evening, I drove through floods of changing light, on my way to dinner, theatre or dance. The electric signs which many Americans find tawdry add, nevertheless, to the gaiety of the scene.

Those arrogant lights of New York! How they lord it over the night! They are everywhere. They blaze and flash and flaunt themselves. Florid and bold, they reign supreme, until men and women seem but shadows, and Light is the only thing alive.

The time came, however, when we had to leave New York. We were going to San Francisco, and from there we meant to sail for Australia. As I drove to the station I looked around me. I was seeing the city for the last time by night, as I had seen her for the first time. But now I knew her streets so well, and her people I had begun to understand. Nothing had changed since our arrival; with undiminished zest New York continued on her way. You felt she was in love with life; she thrilled to it, and you could hear her hurried breathing as you passed.

At the Grand Central Station many friends gathered to see us off. The following evening we would be in Chicago, where we meant to stop for a day. New experiences lay ahead, but we were parting from the present with a pang. There was a hasty gripping of hands, and the train began to move. We watched the little group of friends for as long as we could and, mistily, we saw them wave.

CHAPTER VI

WE HAD no sooner left New York than a stack of letters and telegrams was brought to us from friends who had been unable to come to the station. Among them was a large photograph of the late Mr. George Barr McCutcheon which smiled kindly upon us, seeming to wish us luck on our journey.

After we had had dinner, I watched a Negro porter making up my berth. In a very few moments everything was neatly arranged, and a big paper bag was handed to me. When I asked what it was for, the porter flashed his teeth in a grin, and explained that it was to put my hat in during the night—"No dust," he added.

My father and I each had a section, each section consisting of an upper and a lower berth. Because of this we were able to keep our hand baggage on the upper berths, instead of being obliged to stow it away beneath the seats. As we peered in at the brightly lit bunks, hiding behind their thick green

curtains, we thought how cosy they looked and, being tired, we turned in early.

But, oh, the disappointment of that first night on an American train! No sooner had you buttoned up the curtains that screened you from the corridor, than you discovered there was no room to stand. Not an inch of floor beside the berth. You were forced to undress lying upon the berth, twisting and turning like an acrobat. If you sat upright you banged your head against the berth above; if you bulged against the curtains you were sure to hit a passer-by. The train stopped at short intervals throughout the night, and with grinding and clanking and convulsions, seemed trying to rend itself to pieces, as if in maniacal rage.

However, the next morning, after going through more gymnastics, complicated by a long walk to the crowded washrooms, we had a most excellent breakfast, and then settled ourselves to enjoy the scenery. At Niagara Falls the train stopped for a couple of minutes to give the passengers a view of a mass of plunging green water half hidden in spray. We couldn't see it clearly, but imagination supplied the thrill. All that morning we travelled across snowy Canadian plains, catching occasional

glimpses of straight wide roads planted with little houses, and with figures muffled in furs plodding along. In the evening we arrived in Chicago.

Though we had booked rooms at one of the biggest hotels there, we found on arrival that they had not been reserved. With apologies, the manager pointed to the overflowing hall, and explained that there were five Conventions taking place in Chicago at the moment. The hall was indeed filled with a shifting throng of business men, circling round a large car which was on show in the middle of the floor. A very helpful gentleman connected with the Singer Manufacturing Company, who had come to meet us, volunteered to get us in somewhere else. For at least an hour we waited among our baggage, while he scoured the city for two unoccupied rooms and, thanks to him, we were eventually housed for the night.

This hotel was also crowded with men attending one or other of the five Conventions. Breakfast the following morning was not a success. In the dining-room a few waitresses dashed around with trays. Plates clashed, and cutlery fell in cascades. When we ordered coffee, it was brought in cups, already mixed with milk. We said that we

preferred to mix our own and, after a long interval, four cups appeared, two full of black coffee and two full of milk. We juggled with the beverages as best we could.

I am not going to write much about Chicago, having spent only a day there. Gazing out across Lake Michigan, towards the unseen further coast, I marvelled that any lake could be so vast; and Lake Shore Drive, with its stately mansions, looked superb, in spite of the bare trees and the trodden snow. This was all we had time for, apart from a mistaken stroll through some dull and desolate streets ankle deep in slush; and a fruitless hunt up and down State Street for a confectioner's that my father loved as a boy.

We left that evening, and spent the next three days on the train. It was a quieter, saner train than the first, and we learnt to sleep better on it, though by the end of the journey we had become expert acrobats. I passed the greater part of each day on the platform of the observation car. Here, facing away from the engine, with nothing but a railing between me and the land, I could sit and watch America roll by.

The first day it was the plains of Nebraska, with

now and again a tiny station, a few houses and perhaps a clump of trees. At North Platte, a bigger place, we changed from Central to Mountain time, and gradually ascended into the American Rockies. They were white with snow, and deep blue shadows crept gently over them. Beneath the observation platform, the shining rails, like the wake of a ship, flowed interminably towards the horizon we had left.

In the afternoon of that second day, having changed to Pacific time, we crossed the Great Salt Lake—passed through the miles of smooth water as easily as if we were still on land. "Going to sea by rail," they call it. It was also here, in Utah, that we had the most wonderful celery at dinner. Plump and sweet and perfect, Utah celery once tasted can never be forgotten.

Very early the next morning I raised the shutter at my window, and saw that great snowy mountains hemmed us in. Close to the train they towered, faintly white in the dawn, with dark trees trooping up their sides, like battalions on the march. Later I learned that, in the night, we had been near Ruby Range and the Star Peak Mountains, and I wondered if they had looked as romantic as they

sounded. We were now in California, by the beautiful American River Canyon, and before the end of that day we should be in San Francisco.

The usual tedium of the last hour of a long journey was lessened by the lively monologue of a commercial traveller. His "line" was silk shirts and, for the benefit of the whole car, he laid out his stock on the seats, expatiating upon their merits. Never were there such shirts!

"See the clever way they fasten? Saves you two minutes every morning. Yes, *sir*, maybe you can buy silk shirts for half a dollar less than these cost, but every day you lose two minutes over the buttons. And two minutes a day is more than twelve hours a year. Think of all the dollars you could make in that time. Gentlemen, twelve extra hours every year are given away free with each shirt you buy!"

Soon after this entertainment we reached San Francisco. I had of course imagined arriving by train, not realising that, from Oakland, we should have to take a ferry. It was therefore unexpectedly pleasant to find a white boat waiting for us, and to cross the sparkling Bay accompanied throughout the trip by sea gulls.

On arriving at the hotel I was surprised to find my room looking like a miniature flower show. There was a mass of red roses with a card attached conveying the Manager's compliments, and other bouquets had been ordered by telegram by friends we had left in New York. They made a floral background for the flashlight photographs of us that were taken by the newspaper men, who arrived with cameras before we had begun to unpack. San Francisco, like New York, loses no time.

We stayed in San Francisco for over a fortnight, and I remember it as a warm, sunny, friendly city. To saunter through the streets during the day was to feel immediately cheerful. Perhaps that is why all the men walk along the crowded pavements with their hands in their pockets in such a debonair way.

But in the evening, cheerfulness departed. The streets became empty. Sauntering through them then, you felt you were the last survivor in a deserted city—deserted at a moment's notice with the lights left burning in the shops. Chinatown seemed the only part where you might still hope to pass another human being.

This quarter is to-day a very disappointing Chinatown. There are modern shops with plate-

glass windows, and expensive shawls and curios obviously displayed to attract the tourist. Behind some of the counters are Chinese girls with up-to-date frocks and waved hair. So American is its atmosphere that even the curved roofs and quaint lamps appear somehow out of place, reminding you of an exhibition.

The Chinese theatre that we visited one evening proved interesting for a short time. Long dialogues, the characters sitting stiffly on chairs. Then, at their exit, the beating of a little drum which is supposed to indicate their receding footsteps. Then a stage-hand pottering unashamedly about, and the arrival of another character, also to the tapping of the drum. Towards the end of the performance we turned to a Chinaman beside us who had been studying his programme intently, and asked him to tell us the plot of the play. He replied in fairly good English, that he didn't yet know, but that probably he would have some idea in a week's time. Many of these plays last for three weeks, the audience attending nightly till the end.

But there were other parts of San Francisco which interested me more than Chinatown. There was what they call their "Latin Quarter," full of lit-

tle French and Italian shops, shabby, unobtrusive, but the real thing. There were the stately grounds of the Presidio, and the fine view from the tops of the steep hills—those seven old hills of the city that smile tolerantly down upon the conceited young skyscrapers below.

In one of the large shops I discovered a feature which was new to me, though possibly it may exist elsewhere. A portion of the fancy work department was converted several times a week into a sewing-room for the use of customers. Tables and chairs were provided, and assistants gave free tuition and advice. As long as you had bought your materials at the shop, you were at liberty to spend as many hours as you liked there, with help at hand if needed. I saw numbers of women knitting and embroidering with bright silks, and flashing their scissors at the cutting-out table.

A favourite walk of mine was along the Embarcadero where, at a certain point, you come to cobblestones and must pick your way among the boats, nets and fishermen. At intervals you pass the various piers, getting glimpses of large liners in dock. The sight of these was thrilling, as very soon now I was to be in one of them myself, sailing for Aus-

tralia. From the wharf I tried to read their names, hoping to find the fateful one among them.

Thanks to our friend Mr. Henry C. Smith's having written to him that we were coming, one of our earliest visitors in San Francisco was an American whose home was in Hawaii. We met him on several occasions, and on one of them he told us his history. This was it:

There was a missionary. During a trip home he met a girl with whom he promptly fell in love. They were married, and later she went to Hawaii with him to work among the natives. They were very happy, for the work was interesting, the island was beautiful, and, best of all, they now had a little son. This little son had grown to be the man who was telling us the story.

The tiny mission station made quite a fête day of the little boy's christening, and news of it reached the native Queen. She paid a State visit to see the new baby, and it was evident she took a great fancy to him.

Then one day the child was missing. Frantic search was made, servants were sent to scour the country, but no trace of him could be found. The parents were in despair. Then, after several days,

they learnt that he had been kidnapped by the Queen's orders. He was safe, but closely guarded in the Royal hut.

Entreaties for his return were made in vain. The Queen sent back word to the effect that she had decided to adopt him as heir to the throne. Those few white people then delivered an ultimatum. "If the infant were not returned to his home, alive and well, within twenty-four hours, American warships would arrive and blow the whole island to atoms."

The Queen believed the boast. The next day a green boat, garlanded with flowers, was seen making its way along the river. In a leafy cradle, alone except for the native who was rowing, lay the white baby crowing with glee.

The Queen, nevertheless, still continued to take an interest in him. Before she died she ordered her people to recognise him and his descendants as their uncrowned Kings. They do so still. They recognise the teller of the story as their uncrowned King.

Before we left San Francisco he took us to see his grown-up son and his little grandson. The latter was about three months old, and had been born in Hawaii, where a great ceremony had just been held in his honour. Dressed in his best robes, he

had been formally presented with a native name, and enthusiastically acclaimed by the people as their White King to be.

After our friend had finished the tale he sat cross-legged on the floor, and sang some Hawaiian songs. Rocking to and fro, and beating softly on a brass tray, he crooned the melodies he had learnt in his childhood on the islands.

A few days later we sailed, to the sound of a determinedly cheerful band, and I saw the last of America through a curtain of coloured streamers.

CHAPTER VII

We had very bad weather as far as Honolulu. "The worst storm we have known for years," all the stewards informed us. But we had been told that before, on other voyages elsewhere. I understand it is always said to passengers in bad weather, as it makes the sick people feel they have a right to be sick, and the others feel proud of themselves.

It was rough enough, however, to be thoroughly awful. We staggered and stumbled and went reeling along; breathless and bruised, we fell into deck chairs—only to feel them glide swiftly away with us. Suit cases slid about our cabins, and apples rolled merrily over the floor.

It was during this trip that I nearly killed a steward. One evening I asked for my porthole to be opened, as the wind seemed to be dropping, and I had been obliged to keep it shut for several days. Reluctantly, the steward climbed on to the bunk

and started to open the window. Suddenly, with a crash, he hurled it to and leaped back, covering his face with his hands. At that instant, an enormous wave roared against the porthole, which he had closed in the nick of time. As he explained presently, if he had been a moment later, the force of that water rushing into the cabin might have been strong enough to fling him down, and injure him severely. He looked at me reproachfully and I felt exceedingly guilty.

The voyage to Sydney took three weeks, and the first port was Honolulu. We were due to arrive early in the morning, and for weeks we had been anticipating a delightful day there. But alas, owing to the weather, we didn't get in till ten o'clock at night and, as we sailed again at two in the morning, we saw nothing of the beautiful scenery. We strolled round the town, and returned to the ship with one lively, predominating impression—the extraordinary number of cars in Honolulu. We were continuously dodging them, and brilliant lights that beckoned alluringly from the distance usually turned out to be busy garages.

A week later we arrived at Samoa, where we spent some wonderful hours. Does one ever for-

get one's first view of tropical scenes? Forget the glamour and enchantment of those first native huts? At Pago Pago women were sitting on the grass, selling shell necklaces and "hula" skirts. Barefoot men, resembling bronze statues come to life, paced slowly along, holding up their incongruous black umbrellas. Everywhere were vivid flowers; the bungalows of the white people were smothered in them. On the verandah of one of these, behind the wire netting, I saw dimly a girl in pink playing with a baby in blue. Lovely little homes they looked, but I was told that the American officials attached to the cable station there are relieved about every eighteen months, as the heat of the island is so terribly trying.

Our departure from Pago Pago was most dramatic. A coloured missionary was leaving Samoa to go to Fiji, and a large crowd of natives had come to see him off. They hung flowers round his neck, and kissed him good-bye, and he stepped on board, with head bowed, as if he found the light garland more than he could bear. Then they began to sing to him. Led by two village Chiefs, they sang, looking up at him intently all the time, and weeping. Two of the women abandoned the attempt, and

sobbed like children till the end. The men continued to gaze upward with large, sad eyes, their voices deep and tragic. As the ship drew slowly away, the missionary cast into the sea, between him and the shore, some of the flowers he had been given. It was a sign to his people that he meant to return. At last the singing ceased and, in the silence that followed, a shout from one of the Chiefs arose: "*Pan! Pan!*" (It is finished! It is finished!)

After this we sailed smoothly along for three more days till we came to Suva. On the wharf stood fierce-looking natives, with fuzzy heads. The Samoans had seemed friendly and childlike, but these might still have been ferocious savages. However, they were apparently quite harmless and handled the luggage efficiently. As a matter of fact, they were infinitely better mannered than the wild porters of the Isle of Man, who charge like pirates on to the deck of incoming boats, yelling for victims.

After passing by the sheds which smelt deliciously of sugar, we decided to go for a drive. I shall never forget that glorious day; I felt as if I were driving through all the books of tropical travel I had ever read. There were pineapples and rice and

mango trees, sugar cane and the large ragged leaves of the banana. Our driver was an intelligent Fijian who had been educated at a mission school and who seemed to have a great contempt for the Solomon Islanders whom we saw. He did his best for us; showed us the tree from which Kava, a native drink, is made; picked us some guavas by the roadside and, with much labour, hacked down some sugar cane, eventually bringing us pieces to suck.

There was so much to see. A village, the huts thatched with pineapple leaves, and brown babies, round-eyed and naked, toddling out to watch us pass. Natives, returning from their work of cutting pineapples, yelled and brandished huge knives at us—by way of friendly greeting. There were Indian women with flowing draperies and nose-rings; women washing clothes by a stream; men carrying heavy loads on their heads, or with scales hung over one shoulder; bullock wagons on the roads, and in the fields birds standing upon the backs of cattle.

We lunched at an hotel, the first of its kind I had yet seen. It was white and airy, with tables on the verandah, and waiters in white tunics and crimson sashes.

Several days later we wound our way slowly into Sydney Harbour. Anxious as I was to land, I was obliged to wait some time as my father had been waylaid by reporters, and after they had finished talking they asked him to go up to the boat-deck to be photographed. But at last the long voyage was at an end, another Continent had been reached, and I stepped ashore wondering how I was going to like Australia.

CHAPTER

VIII

As I DROVE from the ship I saw around me bright and busy streets. Tall buildings, shops and trams reminded me of home, but by the cheerful expression on the faces that I passed I knew that I was indeed abroad.

Our hotel was large and up-to-date, the hall appearing to be the rendezvous of half Sydney. In my room was the first mosquito net I had ever seen, and at night, from within this gossamer tent, the lighted room shone soft and etherealised.

A typical incident took place soon after our arrival. There was a knock at the door of my father's room, and a stranger entered, in his shirt sleeves. After apologising for intruding, he explained that his own room was on the same floor, so he had thought he would look in to ask if we would care to go for some drives. "I'm busy at the office all day," he added, "but if you will just ring up when-

ever you want my car, my man will take you around. Please use it any time you like." He stood there smiling, friendly, and quite unself-conscious in his informal attire.

Nearly every day someone took us for a drive, for Australians feel inhospitable if visitors to their country walk much. We liked the surroundings of Sydney immensely. Pott's Point and Rose Bay are exquisite places, and often you come upon unexpected glimpses of the harbour. Sometimes you see it sparkling below, through a tangle of trees, like a blue eye peeping up through its lashes.

On Sundays during the summer, the streets of Sydney are deserted, for nearly everyone spends the day by the sea. Never have I seen a city of such complete, sunlit emptiness as Sydney during a fine week-end. But the surfing beaches themselves are a sight worth seeing. At Coogee and Bondi and Manly, thousands of bathers throng the sands, and joyfully skim the water. Ah, the exhilaration of surfing! To wade out through the breakers with your board, choose the exact instant, and then sweep powerfully in on the lift of the wave—to do this perfectly is to feel yourself a sea-god.

But mere mortals sometimes find the sport rather

painful. The beginner has a way of pointing his surf-board down as he launches himself clumsily forward. Naturally the impetus sends the board plunging into the sand, at the same time hitting him spitefully below the belt. There are boards with straight and others with *retroussés* noses, and if you are learning to surf you will be wise to use the latter as they are easier to manage.

Behind all the fun and laughter of the beaches lies danger. The menace of the shark. At certain points stand tall towers where a lookout man gazes out to sea through a telescope. At the first sign of a distant shark an alarm bell is rung, and the crowds stampede for the shore. It is said that there are very few accidents in the course of a year; there was, however, one accident and one scare during the two or three weeks we were in Sydney. Yet the bathers never worry. Laughing and splashing, not a shadow of a shark seems to cross their minds—until grim reality suddenly stains the blue sea.

Here and there, mingling with the careless crowd, is a man or girl who is an expert at life-saving. Some of the beaches have their own Corps of voluntary life-savers, and periodically they meet for drill. They are truly magnificent, bronzed and

fit, swinging along the sands as if they owned the world.

Sometimes, in spite of invitations to go for drives, we would insist on walking. We generally began with our favourite Macquarie Street, where the houses are burnished so thickly with the brass plates of doctors, that they dazzle from afar. From there we would turn into the Botanical Gardens where, beyond the palms and vivid flowers, one saw white sails slipping across the harbour. On our way back we used to pass numbers of Chinese herbalists who, I was told, are patronised by many residents of Sydney.

One day we were taken all over the building of the Commercial Banking Company. It was decorated with Australian marble of many varieties, and at the entrance to the Safe Deposit Vault was a door which at that time was only the second of its kind in the world, the first having been exhibited at Wembley. It was set in motion for us and, watching it, we held our breath; circular, heavy and very deep, it slowly and inexorably closed.

Another day I wandered in to the Mitchell Library, which is full of treasures. There are valu-

able old letters and books, and maps relating to the early days in Australia, and the walls glow with landscapes by Conrad Martens. I saw there Wedgwood plaques of Captain Cook and Matthew Flinders, and also the first playbill ever printed in Sydney. It announced that in the saloon of the Royal Hotel Mr. Meredith would present that "famous nautical melo-drama 'Black Eyed Susan,' or 'All in the Downs,' " to be followed by a farce.

I believe it is also here that records of the convict days are stored. There are some people who still think that all Australians must be the descendants of convicts—which is ridiculous. These people forget that many of the convicts were simply political prisoners from Ireland, and they never seem to have heard of all those adventurous young men who went out to Australia of their own accord, and settled there.

The following anecdote may interest them. An Englishwoman there had an Australian servant whom she wanted to take back with her to London. The girl said she would like to go but was sure that her grandmother would not consent. So the lady went to try to persuade the grandmother. "Oh, no,"

said the old woman, "I wouldn't never let our Lily go to England. Why, that's where them convicts come from."

The domestic servant problem is acute in Australia, and working hours are made as short as possible. For that reason we found the least attractive time in Sydney was the dinner hour. In restaurants dinners begin at five-thirty and finish about seven, though the hotels, with their larger staffs, are able to manage things better. We had tried several restaurants before we understood this custom of dining in the middle of the afternoon. Arriving punctually at seven, we would find two or three people finishing their meal, and a waitress who barely refrained from sulking at the sight of us. Before we had got to the fish, chairs were being noisily stacked upon the tables, and soon we were left stranded, the last outpost of civilisation in a forest of chair legs.

One evening we saw a pretty scene. It was a national holiday—I forget which one—and in the centre of the city stands had been erected. A band was playing, lanterns swung gently, and in the fluttering light the people of Sydney danced up and down the street.

Watching them, I grew as light-hearted as they. For that is the keynote of Australia: she makes you feel light-hearted. Her charm lies not so much in the appearance of things, as in the gay spirit behind them. Though her cities are not very foreign-looking, though you see familiar fashions, and even taste English cookery, yet after a time you yourself feel quite different from when you were in England. Trifles have lost their power to worry you, smiles come more easily, and the whole world seems younger.

Soon after this, my father and I decided to go to Melbourne, and accordingly we booked sleeping-berths. We found them infinitely more comfortable than those we had had on the American trains. They consisted of two-berth cabins, fitted with wash-basin, drawers, and even a wardrobe. We were not cramped for space this time and there were no acrobatics to be done. After changing trains at Albury about seven o'clock in the morning, we entered the State of Victoria, and I could hardly eat my breakfast for gazing at the scenery.

CHAPTER IX

THE CONCLUSION of that breakfast brought us a surprise. A steward approached my father and murmured: "There will be nothing to pay, sir. You are the guests of the Commissioner of Railways." As we had never met the Commissioner, this was indeed an instance of Australian hospitality. And an hour or so before Melbourne was reached, a large basket of fruit was set before me, "With the Commissioner's compliments." I had, unfortunately, to enjoy it alone, as a representative of Melbourne's evening newspaper, *The Herald*, had travelled down the line to obtain an interview with my father, and they were talking in the dining car.

We arrived about lunch time, and drove to our hotel through wide, shady streets. It has been said that Melbourne was built on Sydney's mistakes, and certainly, with a smaller population, she yet looks the larger of the two cities. Those broad

roads and avenues sweeping away beneath their trees have symmetry and grace. We always found it difficult to realise that Melbourne was so young a city, for there is nothing crude about it, and many of the buildings already look grey and wise. Yet we met an old man who well remembered when one of the busiest streets was nothing but bush growing thickly along the banks of a small stream, and inhabited by hundreds of cockatoos.

About seventy years ago Collins Street, which is one of the finest thoroughfares, looked very different from what it does today. It is now a dignified, gracious street, with columns and spires and trees, and here and there a yellow sunblind peeping through the leaves. But once it was merely a cart track where bullock wagons creaked, and stockmen spent their wages at inns built of wattle and daub.

In Melbourne, beneath the weight of handsome buildings lies many an old landmark. You can read about the tiny two-roomed cottage which was the beginning of the first Bank of Victoria; of the old gum tree under which a doctor attended to his patients; and of the spot where the first baby of the little colony was born in a tent.

After a week or two we decided we would re-

main in Melbourne for some time, and I began to look around for a service flat. There was plenty of choice, and eventually we took one in a residential quarter called Toorak. Most Australian houses possess sleeping-porches which jut out from the walls very attractively, and there was one to our flat. We used it only as a balcony and, as it overlooked the garden and tennis court, it soon became our favourite haunt. It was fascinating to sit there in the warm, dark evenings, and watch the lights flash out on the slopes beyond.

At one season of the year the garden would be filled with the shrilling of cicadas. In every garden, in every road with trees in it, the air vibrated to the incessant, piercing noise. Many people found it maddening, and one girl who lived in a house surrounded by trees told me that it had a curious effect on the whole family. For as long as the din continued, they all took to lisping slightly, only returning to normal when at last the cicadas were silent. But from our balcony well raised above the garden, the sound had a certain charm. In the distance and the dark, it became like a wild, seductive gypsy song.

We stayed in Melbourne for nearly a year. It

was a light-hearted, happy time, brightened daily by the all pervading geniality around us. Even to go shopping was a pleasure, so amiable were most of the employés. They served you with smiles, and took an interest in your choice. But also, they expected to have a little chat with you over the counter, and they seldom said "Sir" or "Madam." If, on leaving the shop, you uttered a formal "Good morning," or "Good afternoon," they looked extremely hurt. The correct thing is to exchange a cheery "Good-bye."

Some English ladies have been known to object to this, imagining rudeness when none was intended.

I wonder what they would have thought of our coal-man. A fine, hefty "Aussie," of the roughest type, his first visit to our flat was startling. There came a sudden pounding at the door, a loud whistle, and then a shout. Dashing bravely forward, I flung the door wide, and saw a tall man bowed beneath a heavy load. In a few strides he had reached the wood-chest and, with a rumble and roar, the coal rushed out of the bag. When the last lot had been delivered he beamed at us through his grime and, flinging the empty sack over his head, he waved his hand and cried, "Ta-ta." His visits never varied.

Always he announced his arrival with a whistle and shout, and took his departure with a jaunty "Ta-ta"! And unless I stopped him deliberately, he never waited for a tip.

I soon learnt that, in Melbourne, the best thing to burn is wood, and the wood should be Mallee roots. These roots come from the Mallee district of Victoria, and make grand fires. They are of all sizes and curious shapes. Some look like giant's clubs, knobby and rough; some have a graceful neck or a slender leg; and others might be gnomes, twisted and gnarled and bent. I used to feel cruel every time I dumped a gnome on the fire, and sometimes I would see a spark glowing until the very end, like his red eye glaring at me accusingly.

Soon after we had settled in our flat, we went to the country for a week to a place called Macedon. Many Melbourne residents have houses there, and these houses have the most charming gardens. Some lead into the woods, without any barrier but a small gate and, from perfectly kept paths and lawns, you can step straight into a maze of trees and undergrowth. I was surprised to learn how quickly trees grow in Australia; often when I pointed out a particularly fine one in some garden, I would be told

that the owner had planted it himself about ten or fifteen years before.

It being my first stay in the Australian countryside, I had not then become fond of the ubiquitous gum trees. English trees are so different; they shelter you kindly, as if they understood all your little sorrows, and wished they could share with you their own wise philosophy. But I didn't at first appreciate the eucalyptus trees. Their twisted boughs and drooping leaves, and the bark that hung in tatters on the trunks depressed me. They seemed to wear a worried look, and perhaps that is how they strike most strangers. But slowly their spell begins to work. Instead of seeing just a tangle of branches, you learn to distinguish the various varieties. Then one day you realise that they are beautiful; to your clearer vision they now possess graceful forms and pensive leaves, and falling draperies of bark. For ever after they will hold a unique place in your affections.

But there is something else about the Australian countryside which is not so pleasant, and that is the flies. In Melbourne they were bad enough, in spite of the wire netting at windows and doors. They used to come into our flat by the dozen. If they

couldn't do it in any other way, they came down the chimney. My father detested them. His desk used to bound beneath the blows he dealt it in his vain pursuit of them; and once he broke a window in his chase, but he didn't get the fly.

At Macedon, however, they were still worse. Big buzzing blow flies darkened the rooms, and out-of-doors clouds of small ones settled on you as you walked. It was not easy to brush them away, for they stuck tenaciously. They accompanied you on your rambles, clinging to clothes and face, and fanning had little effect on them. I am not exaggerating when I say that, on the golf course, you seldom had time to play a stroke before several flies alighted on your face or your hands, or on the ball itself. But no one seemed to mind them much. I have talked to people while small flies crawled contentedly over their cheeks. Or, at most, instead of the frantic gestures we indulged in, Australians just gave their heads a quiet shake occasionally, having learnt by experience that nothing does much good. In some parts of the bush, men go about with corks dangling from their hat brims, for it is said that the bobbing of a cork is the one and only thing feared by Australian flies.

It was while we were at Macedon that we made the acquaintance of Mr. Hugh Grant Adam, the author of "An Australian Looks at America," and Associate Editor of *The Herald*, Melbourne. His beautiful wife has created with her own hands one of the loveliest gardens imaginable; so at least one piece of land in Australia is the richer for her coming. Both of them, by the way, come from Scotland. We found them both delightful, and if we have learnt to like and understand the Australian character, it is chiefly thanks to them, who gave us so many opportunities of meeting Australians.

With Mr. and Mrs. Adam we went one day for a drive near Macedon. Flocks of red and green parrots flew over our heads, poddy-calves stared at us from the paddocks, and magpies hopped about everywhere, bolt upright and very perky.

I learnt that I must call a field a "paddock," and a farm a "station"; and not to say I was going into the country, but "into the bush." I had, of course, already noticed that Australians pronounce the name of their continent much more prettily than we in England do. Instead of our drawn-out "Orstralia," they say "Ostralia," which with its

lightness of touch, suggests the buoyant spirit of that country to perfection.

I used to practice saying "Ostralia," but sometimes I forgot. At a newsstand one day in Melbourne, I asked for a copy of the journal called *The Aussie*. I pronounced it " 'orsy," and the man, looking puzzled, told me that the results of the races weren't known yet.

During that drive from Macedon we came to several smaller places, such as Carlsruhe, and Kyneton where we stopped for tea and a new tire. On a wall in this town we saw an effort at humour which pleased us because of its naïveté. Over the door of a shop was painted in large black letters: O.B.A.Y.Z. After cudgelling our brains for several minutes, we eventually asked a passing boy for enlightenment. He grinned, and explained that it meant "Oh, be a wise head"—and deal, of course, at that particular shop.

On the way back we passed through open country, where there were actually hedges instead of wire fences, and the landscape reminded me very much of Sussex. It was one of the rare occasions when I saw any resemblance between Australian

and English scenery. As we drew near to Macedon again, our friends suddenly stopped the car and pointed out the first kookaburra or laughing-jackass we had yet seen. There he sat, young and fluffy, high up in a tree. Unfortunately, he wouldn't even smile at us, but since then I have often listened to kookaburra mirth, being luckier than Lord Northcliffe who never succeeded in hearing it. I am told that some people cannot hear it without going into explosions of merriment. But to me there was always something more than humour in it. Frequently, it was merely a low, sardonic chuckle. But sometimes in the dark there would roll out a loud, ironic cachinnation, and you would feel uneasy as though you had overheard the gods making fun of you.

On the last evening of our stay we went for an entrancing moonlight stroll, under pines that looked like black fur, and gum trees with gleaming silver stems; past a shadowy creek and a glinting waterfall. On the brow of the hill we paused. From an unseen window, sweetly, came the voice of a girl singing.

CHAPTER X

One of the most interesting people whom my father and I met in the course of our travels was Mr. Will Dyson. He is so well-known in England that many don't realise that he is an Australian. His work in *The Herald* was always a joy to us and, distinguished artist as he is, he might have attained equal distinction as a writer or an actor. Gathered round an enormous fire in Mr. and Mrs. Adam's house, or sitting in their glorious garden, many are the splendid talks we have enjoyed about pictures, books or the Press. Impossible to describe the charm of those conversations, or Mr. Dyson's swift diversions to anecdote and mimicry which made us rock with laughter.

When, before leaving London, I had told a few people that I might be going to visit Australia, the sensation had been tremendous. "Orstralia!" they exclaimed in amazement, "What for?" One woman remarked with an air of finality: "Well, *I* have

never wished to see Orstralia," as if that disposed of the whole question, and damned the whole continent.

I wish that she, and others like her, could meet some of our delightful Australian friends; some of the business men, artists, writers and station owners who came to our flat in Melbourne. We were surprised to discover that in Australia there exists an almost universal love of pictures. Like the majority of English people, we had never associated art with the Antipodes. Yet the appreciation of it is so widespread and so genuine that it seems extraordinary this quality should not be better known in England.

I met a number of fine artists in Melbourne, such as Mr. Streeton and the late Mr. Blamire Young. But it was the general public that surprised us, for there is not, as at home, a comparatively small set that buys paintings; everyone who can afford it does so. I seldom entered a house or a flat without seeing some good ones, their owners loving pictures too much to follow the present fashion for bare walls. I have met few educated Australians who weren't both eager and competent to discuss art. They usually prefer landscape to other subjects, though

they are rightly proud of the portraits of McInnes and the sculpture of Sir Bertram Mackennal. Proud also can they be of *Art in Australia*, that superb magazine published in Sydney.

I spent many hours in the National Art Gallery of Melbourne, which is one of the most richly endowed in the world, and one day I was shown a Van Eyck that had recently been bought for £30,000. At the top of the building the Director, the late Mr. Bernard Hall, conducted his school of art, and in his own large studio he gave the most enjoyable tea parties.

Exhibitions of paintings are frequent in Melbourne, in the large Athenaeum Hall and in the smaller galleries. Which reminds me of an incident that occurred in the house where our flat was situated. The cook there, a homely woman who had never been away from Australia, desired to give a wedding present to one of the parlourmaids. Like all Australian servants, she received very good wages, and was prepared to spend twenty guineas on the gift. But instead of going, as might have been expected, to a jeweller's or a fancy shop, she went to an exhibition of pictures and, guided by

nothing but her own instinct, chose a small and admirable landscape.

Curiously enough, you will never see an artist working in the streets of Melbourne. I believe only one woman has so far done this, braving the crowds that stared. She told me that when she sat at her easel, outside the Cathedral, she was amused to note the number of people who would mount the steps, bang the door as though they had entered, and then stand still as mice behind her, watching every stroke of her brush. During the War she was braver still, for she sat in the street doing lightning portraits of pedestrians, and gave the money to charities.

It is because of all this, and much more beside, that many of the notions about Australia that still persist in England are so false. We have heard of the thousands of miles of scorching plains, and the millions of sheep, but we are apt to forget the life of the cities. We have heard of those who live "down-under," and we imagine that little culture can exist so far from London.

As for the young authors of Australia, my father sympathised with them very much, for they find it disheartening to be so "cut off," as they call it, from

the rest of the world. They yearn to be able to mix with their English confrères, and to breathe the stimulating atmosphere of competition. Even when their work sells well in Australia, the market is small and, as one of them said, to send a manuscript to London means a delay of at least three months before its probable return, and the possibility of submitting it elsewhere. They feel that if they were on the spot they could hustle, but at a distance they are handicapped.

The Australian Press, as a whole, is remarkable for the frankness of its criticism. No matter how popular the musician, singer or actor may be who is touring Australia, if the critic observes any incapacity or affectation he won't hesitate to point it out—his praise, of course, being equally sincere.

Fleet Street is the Mecca of Australian journalists, and numbers of them have been successful there. Though there are many excellent newspapers in Australia, it is those of Melbourne I know best; in the morning *The Age* or *The Argus* while, about dinner time, a boy would whizz up our drive on his bicycle, hurl a bundle of *Heralds* on to the doorstep without dismounting, and whizz out again at the

opposite gate. On my way home, I would hear the newsboys shouting the last edition of that paper; every evening, ringing through Melbourne's streets, one seems to hear the arresting cry: "Hell! . . . Final . . . Hell!"

In Australia, the old word "squatter" is still used to indicate the owner of a sheep station, and to listen to our station friends was in itself an education. Many squatters spend their holidays regularly in Sydney or Melbourne, and their homesteads are often as luxurious as country houses in England. I was told that a few stations still exist which are nearly as large as England itself, though the one I stayed on later possessed a mere twenty-five thousand sheep. But most of these men have been through bad times. Prosperous Melbourne residents will tell you harrowing tales of their early struggles. Well-dressed, well-read women, pouring out tea in their Toorak drawing-rooms, can make your heart ache by descriptions of the terrible loneliness they and their husbands endured for years up-country. Some of these women knew privation during the Great Drought, and the horror of helplessly watching their sheep perish by the hundred, while crows gloated over the stricken animals, not even waiting

for them to die before swooping to pluck out their eyes.

Many Australians have said to me: "I'm afraid you won't find our country interesting as it is so new compared with Europe."

But that is exactly why Australia should interest the visitor. Much as she has already accomplished, you feel that bigger things are to come. You receive the impression of a country just beginning its life, and starting out full of plans and optimism, eagerly adapting herself to new ideas.

While Canberra was being built, the enthusiasm it evoked throughout the continent was marvellous —except among those who, being destined to live there, foresaw themselves estranged from relatives and friends. It was to be no ordinary town, but white and radiant, the Perfect City. I was told, too, that all the workmen there were chosen for their sentiments as well as for their skill, and that every man, as he wielded his spade or his trowel, felt he was taking part in the consummation of an ideal. Though it is likely that those workmen harboured less exalted thoughts unperceived by the public, the idealism that could believe such a thing was remarkable. But when I commented on it, no one appeared

to think it so. The most they said was: "Oh, that's very Australian, you know," and smiled half-apologetically.

After living for some time in Australia you grow to be intensely interested in all that happens to her. Simple things become eloquent. A new bridge or an improved road expresses something more than itself; it means another achievement, another step forward. When misfortunes arrive, such as bush fires or a crippling strike, you grieve sincerely; and each time an Australian makes his mark in England you are glad, and share his country's pride in him. Surely no part of the earth can so easily become an Englishman's adopted land as Australia.

Australians are born with an inherited love of England. Though they may never have been there, and may never be likely to go, yet they speak of it as "Home," and I have learnt to know how much going "Home" means to them. Very many stint and scrape in order to accomplish this, and to all of them it has been a burning hope that they have cherished for years, a very precious dream. Whether it be your partner at a dance or the boundary rider on a station; an enthusiastic young couple looking forward to their first trip, or an old couple who

know they will never see "Home" now, all are one in their passionate loyalty to England.

So when one of these dreamers sets forth on his voyage to reality, one hopes that the beloved will prove kind. Alas! I fear that apart from a few Societies, organised to entertain such pilgrims *en masse*, few people will offer him a welcome. I can imagine my Australian standing in Trafalgar Square, aglow with the thought that at last he has reached his goal—and then I feel a chill creeping over him as he watches the passers-by. Preoccupied, indifferent, the crowd hurries by him; and suddenly the immensity of London will overwhelm him, engulf him, and for a time he will feel unutterably lonely in the throng.

If only England could see the vision that we saw: Australians in teeming cities; Australians solitary, riding across hot empty plains; Australians labouring, choking amid dense timber—and all of them with hearts turned wistfully to England. But England is old—and a little shortsighted.

CHAPTER XI

It was Sunday and I was going into the country for the day. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Adam were fetching me in their car, and later on we were to have a picnic luncheon in the bush. I was also going to be taught how to make billy-tea. These days spent in the bush are such a feature of life in Australia that I feel the subject deserves a chapter to itself.

We started off well wrapped up in woollies and rugs, for it was April and the autumn air had a nip in it. Mr. Will Dyson was with us, and Captain Davies who, I remember, was chaffed a good deal because, though he had thought nothing of exploring the Antarctic with Shackleton, he complained bitterly about a draught from an open window of the car.

At first we passed through some of Melbourne's poorer suburbs which, to me, all looked exactly alike. Tramlines stretched into the distance, and

steep hills succeeded each other monotonously. After every ascent, instead of the inspiring view you had been hoping for, all you saw were more tramlines climbing indefatigably up the next hill—and when you had scaled that one, still another rose before you.

But after about half an hour we were well out into the country, with orchards on one side and masses of eucalyptus trees on the other. Here and there beyond the trees we caught glimpses of blue mountains far away. Sometimes on a lonely bush road, we would meet a small boy or girl composedly riding a large horse; a strong, sunburnt, independent child, who might well have sat for a study of "Young Australia."

Now and again we came to a hamlet springing suddenly out of the bush, and as suddenly left behind. These hamlets are by no means pretty, each wooden house having a corrugated iron roof, and a water tank so large that it seems almost as if the house had been added as an afterthought. The roofs glare fiercely in the sun, though a few are painted a pleasant red or green. The many pretty homes that do exist usually stand in their own grounds, and belong to people with plenty of means. I used

to feel that the magnificent scenery merited more picturesque villages, and I wanted to see mellow brick cottages with thatched roofs and dovecotes.

Then one day I learnt the reasons for this apparent lack of taste. These houses have all been built as economically as possible, for people who have to work hard for their living. They are made of wood because there is a profusion of timber close at hand, and other building materials would have cost too much to transport. Their roofs are of iron because tiles would have been a luxury, and the tanks are enormous so as to hold as much rain as possible. In the bush, rain is one of the most precious things in life. Every drop is received with gratitude, though the time has passed when water cost more than champagne, as it did in Coolgardie in the Nineties.

When you realise all this, you look at those bush homes with different eyes. The ugly roofs have a meaning now, for you have learnt that rain runs easily off corrugated iron into the waiting tank beneath, so that little of it is wasted. There is, too, something primitive about the wooden houses that is in keeping with the forest scenery. They don't clash with their surroundings like some of the hideous villas that disfigure the fair face of England.

I decided after a time that thatched roofs would appear definitely out of place under gum trees, and that dovecotes would merely move the kookaburras to mirth.

Motoring through the countryside one begins to look forward to the sight of these small settlements. Windows warm with fire or lamplight; the bush store that stocks such a variety of goods; the house that takes in boarders, and provides suppers which are called teas; and the plucky little Recreation Hall where an occasional dance takes place, or a lecture is given by somebody from the city.

The landscape we were passing through on this particular morning was typically Australian. Though we were travelling in the newest model of an expensive car we seemed to have left civilisation behind us. The roads cut through what might have been virgin forest. Higher and higher we climbed over densely wooded ranges. Deep green gullies wound away beneath us. Sometimes the road dwindled to a mere track and, peering down over its uneven edge, we could see far below a glorious expanse of open country. Remote and serene, it lay like the Land of Promise, while an ocean of tree tops rolled to meet it, and more ranges rose beyond.

In the august silence that seemed to envelop the world, we heard only the pompous roar of a waterfall.

Moreover, all this beauty was enhanced by radiant sunshine. As we penetrated further into the bush, light-hearted sunlight pursued us. Gleefully it danced its way through the leaves and dappled the ground; gallantly it roved through the woods, caressing a tree until it grew rosy, or kissing a creek into dimples. Could we feel aught but adventurous and blithe as we sped through that debonair day?

After we had been driving for some time, we swooped round a bend in the road and came suddenly upon the lollyman. A table stood on the grass, loaded with sweets, or lollies as they are often called in Australia. His wife made them during the week, and every Sunday he arranged them attractively by the wayside in the hope of selling them to passing motorists. We were not in the mood to resist them, and further on, from some children, we also bought ferns and branches of flowering shrub.

About one o'clock we stopped to have luncheon in a clearing on a hillside, and began our preparations for boiling the billy. We collected a heap of

sticks for a fire and, when we had fanned it into a nice blaze, filled the billy-can and set it on top. It was soon boiling, and then came the critical moment. We dropped a bag of tea into the bubbling water, and at the same time—this was an important part of the ceremony—we stuck an upright twig into the can, the lid of which had now been removed. This twig drew the smoke of the fire upward and so prevented the tea itself from becoming smoked. In a minute or two all was ready, and my friends sat round on the grass watching me take my first sip of billy-tea. I didn't need to pretend to like it, for it was truly delicious. Perhaps it was only imagination, but I fancied I detected a faint woody flavour, as though the sweet breath of the Australian bush had mingled with the tea.

We couldn't spend much time over luncheon as we were going on to Toolangi to see Mr. C. J. Dennis, and we were still a long way off. I was very much looking forward to meeting Mr. Dennis, as I had enjoyed reading *The Sentimental Bloke* when I was still in England, and the chance of my visiting the author in Australia had seemed as unlikely as a visit to the man in the moon.

Toolangi is a little township lying on the crest of

the Dividing Range. Up till now, although it was April, the roads had been fairly good. We had encountered nothing worse than large puddles through which our car had splashed merrily. But now, as we mounted higher into the hills, the trees crowding ever more closely upon us, the going became difficult. Before we realised it, we had lost the road and were wandering along muddy tracks, bumping and skidding in spite of the utmost care. We were now in the very heart of the bush. Tree-ferns, like tall fountains, flung their green spray into the air, and a lovely stillness reigned, stirred only by a faint rustle and thud as some gum tree shed its bark.

Toolangi seemed very far away, but at last we saw a small weather-beaten box fastened to the trunk of a tree, and we knew that someone must be living near. For it was a private letter-box, put there because the owner's house was buried too deeply in the bush for the postman ever to reach it. One often comes upon these pathetic little boxes stranded in the depths of a forest, frail links between lonely men and the rest of the world.

Further on we found a tree bearing the announcement: "To The Post Office." We hailed it joyfully,

feeling that at last Toolangi and the tea we were again craving for must be near at hand. We went slowly on, scanning the bush to right and left, but no house could we see, nor even a hut. Only another and another empty promise of a Post Office; then still more bush and mud. We felt as if we had all strayed into a dream together, and must go on wandering until we awoke.

We never did discover that Post Office, but we suddenly came out into clearer country, and heaved a sigh of relief. For quite close to a good road which we had somehow missed, in a hollow backed by wooded hills, stood a pretty house, its windows fire-lit, a friendly dog bounding to the gate to greet us. Then someone came towards us through the garden, and the next moment I was shaking hands with my "man in the moon."

Mrs. Dennis met us on the porch, uttering a perfect welcome in three words and a half. "The kettle's boiling," she said.

The next few hours passed swiftly while we sat and talked in a room lined with books. Later in the evening we went for a walk and watched the moon rise over the bush. The blithe day was ended and the sun had forsaken the trees; but cool and un-

troubled they rested now, their dark heads contemplating the stars.

Picnics are a favourite form of recreation in Australia, and I spent many happy days out in the country. Once we had tea in a clearing where we found a trestle table, some benches, and a rough hearth on which to boil the billy. Such places are frequently provided in order to lessen the risk of bush fires, which are often caused by people carelessly dropping matches among the timber. Instead of spoiling the scenery these picnic-grounds give one an enjoyable sense of "camping-out."

Another time, hungry and far from any hotel, we stopped at a bush-store high up on a mountain, and were glad to share the family's Sunday dinner. In the living-room behind the shop we had a delicious meal of fried eggs and bacon, followed by cherry pie and cream. I have never enjoyed a meal more!

It was on this day that we found the House of Mystery. Dark trees nearly hid it from view, and the high, rusty gate was adorned with many charms. There were pictures and strange signs fluttering around it, and a button on a string, a brush and an empty reel swayed in the breeze. We could hardly

tear ourselves away from the uncanny spot. Every few moments a large bone, horribly cold to the touch, tapped gruesomely against the gate. I hoped it was a human bone, but my friends were sceptical. However, they assured me for my comfort that in the dead of night, when the wind moans and the owls hoot, the wail of the Banshee can be heard in that house.

These days that I spent in the open remain in my memory as perfect days. There was about them a gaiety and a gladness that I have found nowhere else. It seems to me that Australians have a natural gift for happiness; they possess the spirit of joy in its best form—joy in little things. It carries them through life with the minimum of worry, and an almost invincible good humour. Possibly it has come down to them from their pioneer grandparents who had to smile through their tribulations, or go mad.

In Australia it is as if, when work is done, people took each other by the hand like children, and said: "Come on!" and without any effort or self-consciousness went out and played.

CHAPTER XII

Nor was it only in the bush that we played. On a smaller scale, town life in Melbourne is quite as amusing as town life in London, though the inhabitants of neither city can believe that until they have been to see for themselves.

Glancing over my Australian diary, I read of theatres, dinners and dances. The entries are brief, yet each one reminds me of a dozen details. "Reception to Chaliapin," I read—and again I hear that voice and see that inimitable smile, and once more I am chatting with two of his daughters. They were both charming, and I noticed that the elder one kept a friendly eye on her younger sister, watching over her cocktails and wine. She also remarked that she seldom met anyone who failed to ask her the correct pronunciation of her father's name; I was not one of the exceptions.

How that hastily written record carries me back!

Across its scribbled pages I see a pageant pass: the impressive inauguration of Lord Somers as Governor of Victoria and, a couple of days later, the Opening of Parliament. A Shakespearean evening at a private house, with myself dressed as Ann Page helping with the sandwiches and punch. On the fourteenth of July a cotillon danced at an Alliance Française ball; and another dance given for the officers of the French sloop "Cassiopée"—with crackers and balloons, and white uniforms flitting among the coloured lights in the garden.

I have taken these incidents at random, and not in the order in which they occurred, but they are typical of the hospitality I enjoyed in Melbourne. I have had some tremendously good times there, from the big Navy League Ball, to an informal frolic on a friend's verandah; from an elaborate reception to Lord and Lady Somers, to a moonlight picnic on the river.

Melbourne, by the way, can look rather wonderful in the evening. There are intriguing glimpses of the clear dark water of the Yarra, of reflected lights and shadowy boats, and the gleaming curves of a bridge. Drive slowly along the length of that magnificent thoroughfare St. Kilda Road, and you

will feel the trees making a sweet mystery of the night, while sprinklers, like fairy fountains, dance daintily by themselves on the lamplit grass. Indeed, there is often a glamour about an Australian night that transforms the most ordinary things. You can feel it anywhere, in Melbourne and in Sydney, in the bush and on the open plains—something daring and irresponsible that calls you to adventure.

In the daytime there were garden parties and At Homes and private views, besides the normal routine of tennis and bathing and drives. Tennis is not only played all the year round, but late in the evening too. The public courts are lit by electric standards and, passing them on the way to dinner or theatre, one sees young people playing energetically, their white figures flashing out from the surrounding darkness.

We found that few days went by without an invitation to go for a drive, for Australians are quite exceptionally unselfish with their cars. Not only do they take one out continually, but they will often give an utter stranger a lift. I was assured too, that such offers, except on lonely country roads, could be accepted without hesitation. It is indeed quite usual, while waiting for a bus, to see a car draw up

to the curb and to hear an unknown voice say: "Can I drive you into town?" Which was particularly welcome if you happened to live in Toorak, as we did, for when we were there the buses left much to be desired. They used to go rollicking down the hill with a hop, skip and a bound. Passengers were tossed playfully from their seats with many a merry bump, till bus and occupants were all bouncing away together in a sort of breathless jig.

Besides these buses there were nice old cable trams, slow but quaint. They were built in two sections, the open front part being called the "dummy." In warm weather it was pleasant to travel through the streets on this dummy, as on a moving verandah, even though your feet were within an inch or two of the road, and strange puppies might race barking beside you. Before we left Melbourne, however, the tramlines were being electrified, to the sentimental regret of many people who had grown fond of their old cable cars. Some of the dummies were bought and set up in private gardens, to be used as summerhouses and in time to become beautified by creeper.

One of the most exhilarating drives near Melbourne is along the coast, for the beaches stretch for

miles, one after another, and during the summer they glow like tropical flower gardens, abloom with brilliant bathing wraps and gaudy parasols. Several of these beaches are screened from the road by a tangle of ti-tree—those fantastic trees that twist and writhe as though posing for Arthur Rackham.

A good point about the bathing is that you are not obliged to undress in a hut or a tent, but can undress at home, and motor through Melbourne's busiest streets in a swimming costume without exciting comment. Or if you prefer it, you can park under the trees, drape a dust sheet completely over your car, and proceed to disrobe in privacy, if not in comfort.

I remember one day going with friends to visit the artist Mr. Daryl Lindsay, and his wife, at their house in the country. After luncheon some of us decided to go for a bathe, but as we were a fair way from the sea we thought a near-by dam would meet the case. So, after changing, we set off, and it seemed odd to be driving through the heart of the country in swimming suits, and still more odd when we drew up at a stranger's house and, picking our way up the path on bare toes, mentioned Mr. Daryl Lindsay's name, and asked for permission to use the dam. But

with true Australian tolerance, the gentleman showed no surprise at our incongruous appearance amid the fields, merely remarking that we should find the water "yellow but clean."

In spite of the thousands who flock to the beaches I never saw one that was really overcrowded. There was no jostling, none of that unpleasant proximity to one's neighbours that, on the cramped shores of England is the price paid for sea air by the multitudes who need it most. In Australia there is room for everyone on those ample sands. Room to lie at full length and let the sunshine soak into your blood; room to spread your arms wide and draw deep breaths; room to cast your cares away and let your spirit soar.

In writing of Melbourne's social activities I feel I must mention Government House Garden Parties, though I do not include them among my "tremendously good times." They sound so exciting, and are in reality so disappointing. Some were better organised than others, but the best were overcrowded and tiring. They are no doubt the logical outcome of the custom of "signing the book" at Government House, and probably most people would resent their discontinuance. But one wonders

how many Governors themselves would be sorry to see them done away with. What an ordeal it must be to stand and smile while perhaps five thousand people file before them; to watch those ungainly bows and curtsies, and to shake five thousand hands as if they enjoyed the job! As the people move forward inch by inch the predominant thought, judging by the conversation, seems to be "tea." Tired and hungry glances wander in search of the tea tent, and there is always a stampede in that direction as soon as possible. One can sympathise with their desperation when one remembers that they may have been standing for a couple of hours in that closely packed throng, perhaps in the rain, until the august portals open to permit them to pass slowly inside.

A great deal of private entertaining is done in the afternoon in Australia, owing to the "servant problem," tea parties being easier to deal with than dinners. For the same reason people frequently issue invitations for after dinner, and at about ten o'clock they will provide a hearty supper of sandwiches, and cakes and tea. Even when we had been dining at a house we were never allowed to leave without this extra and very attractive meal, which is

referred to as "just a cup of tea before you go."

Tea! Oceans of it in Australia. Even though they don't grow it, the tea leaf could well be their national emblem. The beverage is drunk in vast quantities and at all hours. Thousands drink it copiously at least seven times a day for, apart from their early morning, breakfast, eleven o'clock and afternoon tea, they will often take plenty with their luncheon and their dinner, as well as before going to bed. And during the few waking hours that remain to them they will joyfully snatch odd cups at the least excuse. They relish tea even more than Americans relish ice water, and in every household two of the dearest possessions are the teapot and the billy-can. Yet a doctor in Melbourne once said to my father: "If less tea were drunk here, there would be fewer brass plates in Collins Street."

As a contrast to the prevalence of tea we found good fruit excessively difficult to obtain in Melbourne. Canned, it is ubiquitous, but while fresh there seems little demand for it, unless things have changed very considerably since I was there.

I remember one day trying to buy a basket of fruit for a friend who was ill. Passing several windows which showed nothing but an untidy jumble

of chocolates, cakes and bananas, I at last decided to go to a big store. After wandering through various departments I asked to be directed to the fruit. "Fruit?" echoed the young lady, looking flustered. "Oh—yes—*fruit*. Er—do you mean prunes or pressed figs?"

Eventually a policeman advised me to go to the railway station. So, after buying a basket at one shop and some ribbon at another, I went into the Station and found the first tempting display of fruit I had yet seen. No one could have wished for anything better, and there, half hidden by mounds of pineapples, a nice girl in a white overall filled my basket for me. There may have been excellent shops in Melbourne which I never discovered, but the difficulty I experienced shows what a small part fresh fruit can play in the daily diet of a fruit-producing country. Yet when one does get hold of the best kind, nothing could be more delicious. Once or twice we tasted perfect apricots and peaches; and one day, after hearing my father's pathetic complaints on the subject of fruit, someone sent us a case of oranges, labelled "Just to prove what Australia can do"—and the proof was overwhelming.

I referred above to the servant problem in Australia, and it is certainly a big one, for domestics there have to be humoured to an absurd degree. The dinner hour is often put forward at great personal inconvenience, in order to give the maid a longer evening out. I heard of one such pampered girl who, when she was not strictly on duty, would refuse to answer the telephone, and would let it go on ringing violently while she sat calmly in the kitchen a few feet away. Another maid, in the house where we had our service flat, was asked if she would mind for once dividing her month's annual holiday into separate fortnights. The girl's refusal was prompt and definite. "I'd rather leave for good and all," said she. "The days of slavery are over."

We were told many similar anecdotes by the charming proprietress of these flats, and it was she who gave us the following details of the number of meals consumed daily by the staff. I made a note of them, and reproduce it here:

STAFF MEALS PER DAY

7 A. M. Morning tea, bread and butter.
7:45 A. M. Breakfast: tea, bacon, eggs, fish.
9:40 A. M. Morning tea, enormous slices of bread smothered in butter and jam.

Midday. Fresh meat and pudding.
2 P. M. Tea, bread and butter with chopped bananas.
4 P. M. Tea and sandwiches.
5:45 P. M. Cold meat, anything left over, bread and butter and jam.
8 P. M. Soup and pudding from dining-room.
9 P. M. Tea, bread and butter.
(Those who are out have last item at 11 P. M.)

While on the subject of food I should like to add that many are the tea parties I have enjoyed in Melbourne. Yes, actually enjoyed, for usually I fight shy of such functions. In Australia one often goes to tea in the morning, and I remember my perplexity the first time I asked a friend if she would "come and have tea on Tuesday," and she answered, "I could only come in the afternoon." But whether I was invited for eleven o'clock or four, I always found an elaborate array of cakes and sandwiches. So many varieties of sandwich! I was continually tasting new mixtures. Unfortunately I have forgotten the more unusual kinds, but egg and olive, cheese and celery, and apple and lettuce were frequent combinations. At one house there were sandwiches of chopped walnuts and honey, and at an-

other thin bread and butter rolled round luscious hot asparagus tips. The one thing I was never offered was jam, and when, at a tea party of my own, I had unimaginatively ordered some, everyone exclaimed politely: "Jam sandwiches! How delicious!"

There was no stiff and starchy drawing-room atmosphere at any of the teas I went to. On the contrary, in spite of the smart hats and the dainty tables, I found the same frank and easy companionship as when we knelt on the grass and boiled the billy. Australian girls are greatly to be admired for their complete lack of affectation. They are also exceedingly capable. They make many of their own dresses even when money is no object, and more than once, at an early dance, I have met a girl who said she had been preparing the dinner at home, with an apron over her evening dress.

I was told that there are a few families who are trying to introduce more formality, more "English manner" as they call it, into their gatherings. Anything that is not quite English shocks them; they cry "It isn't done!" and frown upon the offender. I can't help feeling that such an attitude, though complimentary to us, is a great mistake. Formality

doesn't necessarily signify culture, and the principal charm of Australian women is their naturalness of manner. Once they acquire affectations they will lose that charm; their quick, sunny smiles will grow careful and cold. The daily tyranny of trifles will burden their buoyant spirits, blotting out the simple joys of life.

CHAPTER XIII

One day I received a thrilling invitation to stay for a few weeks on a "station." Having heard so much about station life from our squatter friends, I jumped at the opportunity for such a new experience. My father, too, was pleased for my sake, and early one morning he saw me off from Melbourne, en route for Mount Gambia in South Australia.

Of the journey itself I remember very little, and I find that I have made no notes of the scenery on the way. But what did make an impression on me, judging from my diary, was the discomfort of the refreshment rooms at up-country railway stations. Those at which I stopped were nothing but small draughty sheds, without tables or chairs. I remember one in particular. It was lighted by a solitary gas jet, and from the walls jutted two or three rough ledges, something like those provided in Post Offices for writing telegrams, and at these crowded as many

people as possible, uncomfortably wielding knives and forks. Others, who were unable to find room at the counter, sat on the wooden floor, their plates on their knees, drinking their tea among the dust and the feet. I felt as if I had stepped into a film of the early pioneering days. But even over this dreary scene Australian cheerfulness triumphed; after tedious hours in the train strangers passed each other buns with a smile, their teeth gleaming faintly in that dim cold shed.

I arrived at Mount Gambia at eleven o'clock in the evening, where my friends met me and took me to an hotel for the night. At that time it was the chief hotel of the tiny place, well-known among station owners and commercial travellers in those parts, there being one or two others that catered for a rougher clientèle. On entering I had a glimpse of two or three obvious "travellers" lounging on the horsehair sofa in the narrow hall, then I stumbled sleepily up the linoleum-covered stairs to a clean and adequate bedroom.

The next morning my friends decided to take me for a walk and show me some of the local scenery. It was a glorious walk, uphill past masses of fir trees, then on to still higher ground with magnificent

views. We came to what is called the Blue Lake which, when I saw it, looked grey-green and rather sombre. A cold green light seemed to glass it over, and the streaky volcanic banks were grim. I was told that this lake has risen to such an extent that one day some people who were rowing on it came across a stump which, on inspection, proved to be the top of the chimney of an old boat house that had become submerged. There is much volcanic ground near Mount Gambia, and in the centre of the town is a large hole that goes down into the earth no one knows how far. Some years ago a little girl fell into it while playing, and her body was never found. Since then it has been railed in and a small garden made near-by. I give these anecdotes as they were told to me, but I feel that they should be narrated more scientifically than I am capable of doing.

After the Blue Lake we passed the Leg of Mutton Lake and, after plunging through trees and undergrowth, we came suddenly out on the brow of a hill and saw what I thought was the loveliest of the three—the Valley Lake. It lay below us in a hollow, surrounded by green hills like cliffs; there was a small wooded island, the only sign of life being an

upturned boat drawn on to the grass, and glistening in the sun. The whole scene expressed contentment and peace, and gave the impression of some lonely shore where the last survivor from a shipwreck might have landed and made himself a home.

In the afternoon we set out for the "station," passing on our way plantations of baby firs only a few inches high. As we neared the house I saw vast plains stretching into the distance, then came a succession of gates, and finally the joyful surprise of a pretty garden. For some reason I hadn't imagined there would be flower beds on anything so utilitarian as a sheep station, and had pictured the plains rolling right up to the front door. As a matter of fact they almost did, but not quite, for a hedge, like a breakwater, stemmed their onward rush, protecting house and garden.

That first day, before I was able to take in details, was one of confused impressions, and perhaps I cannot convey them better than by again quoting from my diary. Written hurriedly in bed, by candlelight, it reads: "Arrived at station today. Seen many horses, cows, cats, dogs and wild bees—but no sheep yet. The garden is ideal, all fruit trees and flowers, white blossom and birds. And every-

where there are sunny verandahs, and in the evening log fires and lamplight."

The next day I found that the house really consisted of separate bungalows. Besides various outbuildings, there was the main part containing the one large living-room, to the left a bungalow of two or three bedrooms, and to the right another which was the kitchen. This kitchen was the original old house dating from the early days of the station, and had an uneven stone floor and walls partly built of wattle and daub. All the food had to be carried down the kitchen steps, across an intervening space, up the steps of the main verandah, and along its entire length before reaching the living-room. In the evenings, when we all helped to clear away the supper things, it was no easy feat to do this journey while carrying loaded trays, feeling one's way up and down the wooden steps and over tufts of grass in the pitch dark.

I found the novelty of life on a station most enjoyable. Everything was so different from country life in England, even simple things like getting one's letters. In the smallest village at home the romance of the mail is inevitably obscured by the efficient regularity with which it is delivered. But on those

Australian plains, several miles from the nearest neighbour, each letter-day was an event, involving coöperation on one's part. It meant a drive of over an hour to a small railway halt, where our mail would be waiting for us in the station-master's tiny office.

These drives were always great fun for we were never quite sure what might happen en route. Off we would go, either in the Ford truck or in the trap, taking with us a waterproof wallet for the letters. The start was invariably exciting as all the horses in the paddock would want to accompany us, and they always did their best to escape through the gate as it was being held open for us. Perhaps the journey by truck was the more stimulating, for sometimes parts of the ground were so swampy that it was doubtful if we should get through, and there were also huge hollows that had to be negotiated. Indeed, when I was at the wheel I felt quite proud of myself as we successfully bumped into holes and out again, and went rumbling and rattling away over the plains. In fact, I found the horse much more awkward to manage as it was a very big horse and a very small trap, and there were times when he

seemed to forget completely that we were behind him.

Large lizards lay asleep all over the place, resembling so much the colour of the ground that it was often only by luck that we avoided them. About every quarter of a mile we had to stop while one of us got down to open a gate, some of which were ramshackle and merely held in place by wire. When it was my turn I would relieve the monotony of the job by seeing how fast I could jump down, unfasten the gate, refasten it, and catch up again with the horse or truck.

On arriving at the railway station we sometimes found that the station-master was away, and we would have to procure the key of the office from his wife. She lived in a cottage with a front garden as neat and pretty as a picture postcard; there were two postcard children and a canary, and they had all come out from bonny Scotland and were trying not to feel homesick.

In the small office on the platform we would find our mail tied into a bundle and placed in our own particular pigeonhole. There were several of these pigeonholes, each labelled with the name of a "sta-

tion" in the district whose owner would send in for his letters. Driving back across the sunny plains with our now heavy wallet, past gleaming gum trees and stretches of quiet blue water, seldom meeting another human being in all that empty loveliness, one felt one had come into close touch with the romance and marvel of the mail. By land, sea and air, flimsy letters were travelling about the world, and the wonder seemed to be, not that so few of them were lost, but that even one of them should succeed in reaching its goal.

On these drives I saw enough sheep to last me for the rest of my life. Masses of them, packed closely over wide areas; flocks of them holding us up as they bolted from the sight of our Ford truck. They never seemed to be in any real panic, but they would jostle each other, and push and scramble, and the weakest would be left behind. When I am waiting for a London bus during the rush hours I am often reminded of those sheep.

There is one feature of station life that is, unfortunately, unforgettable. When sheep die they are sometimes left out on the plains to lie and rot where they fall. Even small stations like the one I stayed on are vast affairs, and one can realise the difficulty

of boundary riders scouring hundreds of acres in order to find perhaps one such carcass, and burn it decently. The life of a squatter is hard and precarious, a drought often destroying the result of years of toil; it is the battle for existence in one of its most elemental forms, and no doubt, as in bloody battles, the sensibilities grow blunt. Therefore, under the blue sky, amid all the beauty, lie the dreadful bodies of decaying sheep, and the small pathetic skeletons of lambs. Sometimes two bodies lie near together—a little one and its mother. Once I found a lamb's skull in the grass; it looked piteously young and weak, and as though still crying for comfort.

At first these sights shock one. It seems almost as heartless to pass on, leaving those poor bones uncovered, as it would be if they were human. One suddenly feels indifferent to the blue sky and the fair landscape; they have grown powerless to inspire. One feels that beauty in this world is but an illusion, and death the only reality.

Even after one has ceased to exaggerate, and has inevitably grown more hardened to these things, they continue to exert their influence. In such surroundings it is easy to imagine that, if faced with

the choice between a safe or a dangerous course of action, one would decide recklessly for danger—not from courage, but because the familiar sight of dead lambs callously cast aside makes for cynicism: Eat, drink, and be merry and damned, for tomorrow *we* die too.

CHAPTER XIV

When work on the station was not very heavy we would go out in the afternoon for a drive or a picnic. We usually took a spade with us in the car for it was so muddy that we sometimes got bogged and were obliged to dig ourselves out.

I found the scenery quite different from that around Melbourne. It was flatter and less wooded, and there was about it a much more isolated atmosphere. The trees, with their red or silver trunks, stood clear cut in the sunlight, and the shadows were sharp and clean. The swamps, which dried up in the summer, were lovely in spite of their ugly name. They were large expanses of blue water, bordered by reeds, often with red-brown cattle standing in them knee-deep.

I remember one picnic in particular. We had collected a big pile of branches, which we had built up in some special way; I forget the intricate details

now, but when finished it made a high mound with a tunnel through the centre, so that the flames sprouted out on all sides with the prettiest effect, rather like an enormous blazing starfish.

It was a peaceful scene upon which we gazed, typical of that part of the country. Graceful gum trees surrounded us, with here and there a dark feathery she-oak, supposed to be the oldest tree in Australia. Occasionally a white cockatoo with a golden crest flew over our heads, and I was told that the aboriginals call these birds "dream carriers." Near at hand, in one of the swamps, the frogs kept up their amazing, incessant croaking that, as darkness drew on, would rise more insistently, to continue with unabated vigour throughout the night. As we lay on the grass listening to this untiring chorus, someone related the anecdote of the Queen who, unable to sleep because of the croaking of frogs in a lake, ordered her servants to stand in the water every night, and beat about them with sticks. The plan succeeded admirably, for the frogs stopped croaking, the Queen slept—but the servants stood in the lake all night.

Still gazing at our peaceful surroundings, I found it difficult to picture the scene of another anecdote

that was told by a man who said his grandparents had actually taken part in it. They had been the first settlers in that neighbourhood, and when they arrived from England to take up their land the aboriginals were most unfriendly. The couple were given a bad reception, and one blackfellow threw a spear at the Englishman who, according to the fashion of those days, was wearing a tall hat. But the spear did no harm for, having never seen any other white people, the aboriginal aimed straight at the hat, evidently assuming it to be part of the young man's head.

Driving back from these picnics was always interesting, as in those lonely parts the smallest incident becomes something of an event. Once we met, out on a great silent plain, a buggy filled with laughing, rosy-faced children, and we were much excited at seeing such a rare crowd. Usually in the course of several hours we might meet one man, afoot or on horseback, and I noticed that no two people ever passed each other without a word of greeting and the kindly wave of a hand. That they might be strangers mattered not at all; the important fact was that two human beings had met amid those immense solitudes. True democracy of the Bush where

labourer and gentleman hail one another, and both are glad of the encounter!

Having returned over the boundary of our own station we would perhaps come upon a group of men gathered round a black, smoking machine which, they said, was being used to suffocate the rabbits in their burrows. Rabbits are so much of a pest in Australia that, though they are occasionally included in hotel menus, I personally never met a squatter who would even look at the dish. When offered rabbit, I have seen an expression almost of horror come over a man's face, as if the wretched little beast were "unclean."

Whenever we went into a certain paddock we were invariably welcomed by what the owner of the station called his "old pensioners." They were horses that were past work, but whom he was too fond of to have destroyed. So he put them all together in a large field, and there they spent their declining days eating and sleeping. But as soon as he appeared in sight they galloped to meet him as fast as their old legs would go, and it was touching to see their obvious affection for him as he stood in their midst, and patted and spoke to them each in turn.

Talking of horses reminds me of my first riding lesson. When there was no other work for it to do, I was lent a pony, a nice quiet pony called Elsie, and one of the station hands undertook to teach me. It may have been rough tuition, but it was effective and speedy. After a few minutes of being shown how to mount and dismount, we started out, and my first sensation of being perched at a giddy height, far above human aid, soon wore off—though every time Elsie so much as twitched her ears I feared she meant to bolt. From walking and trotting we worked up to short canters, and at the end of a couple of hours I remember dashing away on my own to the far end of a paddock, in what I was told later was but a canter, though it had seemed to me a mad, hell-for-leather gallop. Having been in the saddle for two hours that first day, I considered myself somewhat stoical in going out again the following morning. As I possessed no riding kit, I was always lent a man's pair of leggings and corduroy trousers, with which I wore my own jumper and felt hat, and in that garb I was told I looked as if I were about to do a music-hall turn.

I have done no riding since then, and I don't pretend to be a horsewoman. But sometimes when

I walk along the Row, between the prim green chairs and the haughty, immaculate riders behind the rail, those breezy days come back to me. I can see Elsie threading her way among the trees and across the reedy swamps; and then I feel a rush of wind, and hear the harness creaking, and the thud of her hooves as we go pounding over the plains.

During my visit to the station I found that every day brought forth fresh interest. There was always something different to be seen or done, even if it was only the feeding of milk out of a spoon to a sick lamb that lived in the kitchen. I remember my surprise when, on the first evening of my stay, as we sat quietly before the fire in the living-room, this lamb dashed in at the open door and began rushing round the table like a playful puppy, threatening to upset the lamp at every bound. He had been found and taken to the house when his mother died, so escaping the lonely end of many station lambs. He was making good progress in the art of drinking out of a spoon, though what he much preferred was to suck somebody's finger previously dipped in milk. Surely no woman, even the brightest of our young persons, could have failed to feel a thrill at the touch of those eager lips pulling at her fingers.

Another pet of the station was a large lizard. It came unexpectedly into my room one evening while I was lying down, and as it was the first I had ever seen, and I hadn't been told about it, I was startled. It came slowly towards me, opening and closing its small black cavern of a mouth. In the dusk I had no idea what kind of beast it was, and when it began to climb up the bedpost I hurriedly left the room. Afterwards, I was informed that lizards have gentle natures, and that this particular lizard often paid us visits and was regaled with saucers of milk.

One day I was shown the shearing shed, and though the shearing hadn't started it was interesting to see the apparatus. I remembered admiring the speed with which sheep were shorn in the Australian pavilion at the Wembley Exhibition, though I hadn't then imagined that I should ever be lucky enough to stay on a station myself. Instead of a brilliantly lit building, with fascinating dioramas and a large imitation sun, I now stood in a dim shed that smelt strongly of the wool of generations of sheep—but it was the real thing. Through the open door, across the darkness shot a golden shaft of genuine Australian sunlight, and outside I saw Elsie

waiting for me, and heard her paw the ground.

Whenever there happened to be a spare half-hour I would take my golf clubs and practise shots on the plain just outside the garden gate. I think the immensity of this plain must have inspired me, for my balls went further than they have ever done on any links. No one who has played with me would credit those drives that only the cattle witnessed! Distant sheep would wisely run when they heard my ball coming; whereas on a certain course near London I have more than once seen a sheep stand still on the top of a bunker in a direct line between me and the hole, placidly watching me play close by. Its touching confidence in me was never misplaced.

Though it was exhilarating to knock balls about on land that spread to the horizon, I sometimes felt it to be rather ridiculous. The Royal and Ancient Game seemed childish and trivial amid those ages-old surroundings. That rough grass was meant for the nourishment of stock, not to serve as a playing field; and to flourish toy clubs around seemed to mock the seriousness of the life and labour of a station.

Though my days were so full of variety, it was easy to imagine how lonely up-country existence

could be from one year's end to another. The "great open spaces" that sound so romantic become oppressive when they separate you from easy communication with your fellows. I heard of more than one man who, when his toil for the day was finished, found the solitary silent evenings in his cottage so unbearable that he took to conversing with himself. One of these men had begun the habit when still young by reading aloud to his dog, no doubt thinking it a pluckier thing to do than to sit and brood. Gradually he fell into the way of talking to himself while at work, and now, at the age of sixty, he went about mouthing and mumbling—victim of the loneliness which had vanquished him at last.

On the final evening of my stay I went down through the garden to the little gate in the hedge, and looked out across the plains. It was very dark, and all I could see was a blur of trees against the stars, but there was as well a sense of infinite space. The solemnity of all starlit nights was magnified by this knowledge of unbounded solitude; such healing solitude for the visitor like myself, but how easily fraught with terror for those who were its captives. We, the handful of humans lost in the heart of it,

seemed such frail defenceless creatures, sheltering in our flimsy bungalows, lighting brave fires by night to keep ourselves warm, and little lamps by which to see.

Yet, as I turned back from the gate, a light from a window streaming on to a bed of flowers shone triumphantly, like a symbol of the human courage that, in solitude and travail, had brought forth a home.

In the eaves of the verandah the wild bees had settled down for the night, but in a near-by swamp the voices of the frogs were still rising in a steady clamour.

CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST stage of my journey back to Melbourne was rather amusing, for the car having developed engine trouble, I travelled all the way to Mount Gambia in the Ford truck, comfortably propped up on the floor of it with suitcases and rugs. After my few weeks of station life I found the small town quite exciting, and in its busy High Street I bought a copy of the *Sydney Bulletin* and felt I was in touch with the world once more.

I put up for the night at the same hotel at which I had stayed on arriving at Mount Gambia, and made a closer acquaintance with its homeliness. After supper, which was referred to as "tea," favoured visitors were invited into the proprietor's parlour, and soon strangers were chatting together informally. The following morning I was called at five, as my train left very early, and while dressing I heard the porter pounding on other doors. When

I went downstairs he showed me into the kitchen, informing me casually that early travellers always had their breakfast there. The table was covered only with a newspaper, and a youth in a dirty apron was frantically frying eggs and bacon. A little later several station hands hurried in and joined me at table, and we sat bolting the thick bacon together in sleepy silence. As I hastened to catch my train through the still dark and empty streets, I felt that that kitchen breakfast had put the finishing touch to my interesting experience of up-country life.

Much as I had enjoyed my visit, it was pleasant to be in Melbourne again. Certain aspects of the city struck me afresh—the masses of flowers at street corners, the colours of the blooms enhanced by their purple wrappings; a particularly vivid splash of flowers and purple paper glowing against the grey walls of the Town Hall; and the usual bright crowd of young people meeting and strolling round the Block—that quaint confusion of arcades and shops that proves so useful as a rendezvous.

After my return from the station, I soon found myself surrounded once more by the warm and cheery hospitality which I had learnt to associate with Melbourne. It was nice to be going to theatres

again, especially to first nights; Saturday, by the way, being always the evening chosen for new productions. Excellent companies go out to Australia, and Australians are such keen playgoers that they will go to see the same play many times. In Melbourne a piece may draw crowded houses for weeks on end, whereas in an English city of the same size the programme has usually to be changed every six nights.

A theatre party nearly always finished up with a visit to a dance club or a restaurant, or perhaps a drive along the dark Esplanade to the blazing if plebeian lights of Luna Park. Then there was Cup Week with its dinners and dances and gay luncheon parties out-of-doors—such a famous Week that it needs no description from me—and the opening of the Australian Art Association, popularly called "the three A's." There were also those delightful and informal dinners given by the Alliance Française of Melbourne, to which I was so often invited by the Belgian Consul and his wife, Monsieur and Madame Vanderkelen. During dinner, conversation at the Consuls' table was invariably carried on in French, and it struck me as a pretty compliment to France that, on an unofficial occasion, the

language of that country should be spoken so steadfastly by foreigners in a far city of the Antipodes.

One of the most interesting aspects of life in Melbourne was the work of the New Settlers' League. Thanks to the kindness of Lady Masson I had often attended Meetings of the League, and had taken part in the welcome always offered to new settlers as soon as they arrived. Since my visit up-country it was easy for me to picture something of the life that lay before these men, though nearly all of them would go to far rougher stations than I had seen. Most of them would have to clear the land of trees before any ploughing and sowing could be done, and few of them can have realised how utterly different are the conditions on a lonely "block" in Australia from those on the poorest farm in England. In spite of all this, however, I was told that thousands of Englishmen have managed to make good on the land, and that many of them and their wives write enthusiastic letters, exulting in the interest and freedom of their new life.

I can see them still, those hundreds of hopeful young men just out from home. The large room at the Immigration Bureau would be full of them, there would be a short speech of welcome, and

then tea and cakes would circulate among the crowded benches. Those rows of faces! Some so eager and bright, as though unassailed by any doubt as to ultimate success; others already shadowed by experience and sterner than they should have been at their age; and here and there a man who stood aloof and spoke to no one, but drank his tea mechanically, his thoughts dwelling painfully in the past. Always there were one or two such men, and one felt it an impertinence to intrude upon them with cheery words of welcome, though God knows they sorely needed comfort. The majority of the men talked among themselves in low voices, gravely, seeming to cling together rather desperately before separating to go their lonely ways in this new life of theirs. I have often wondered since how many of those plucky, homesick boys have now settled down happily.

At any rate, the members of the New Settlers' League did their utmost, among other things, to make the new arrivals feel at home. One of the members deserves perhaps special mention, as she spent long hours in a microscopic scullery, washing up. Never could she be persuaded to take part in the reception of the immigrants, but invariably remained

behind the scenes. In a stifling atmosphere, among steaming kettles and stacks of dirty crockery, she smilingly kept up an unfailing supply of clean cups and dishes. It seems to be that many thousands of emigrants to Australia can thank that lady for her unobtrusive help along the first steps of their new trail.

The time was now, alas, drawing near when we should have to say farewell to Australia. We had been in Melbourne almost a year, which was a much longer stay than we had anticipated. Instead of going straight back to England, we determined to return by way of South Africa as my father hadn't been there since he was a boy, and had always wanted to go there again.

Soon we were preparing to leave our pretty flat in Toorak. Though we had determined to keep our luggage light, we were obliged to pack an enormous wooden case with all the books that had been presented to us by Messrs. Angus and Robertson's, the booksellers in Sydney, and by Messrs. Robertson and Mullens of Melbourne. I had seldom been into either shop without having my arms filled with novels, volumes of verse and large, beautifully illustrated books on art.

At last the morning came when we drove to the docks and boarded the *Demosthenes*. A crowd of friends came to see us off, our cabins soon became filled with flowers, and to the very last we were surrounded by kindness and smiles. Suddenly the band blared out, and the usual paper streamers leapt from ship to shore. From behind that tawdry tangle we waved good-bye to Melbourne, and to the happy time we had spent there.

If I could I would utter a warning to all intending travellers from England to Australia, so as to save them from possible disappointment. I would say, "Do *not* expect the cities of that continent to be greatly different from our own, for Australians have made them as English-looking as they can, out of their love for England which they still call 'home.' Also you will need to see the superb scenery of the bush many times before you can appreciate it."

In most countries it is the places themselves that one first learns to know and like, and only afterwards the people. In Australia, unless you know her people you will never really know and like the country. For it is they who make it so attractive. It is their blithe, unaffected kindness that seems to irradiate the grey walls of Melbourne, until you

forget that you have travelled to the Antipodes only to find something very like what you have left at home. It is their keen sense of enjoyment that makes you interested in every tree and fern that grows in the bush, and shows you the beauty you might otherwise miss. As I said in an earlier chapter, the charm of Australia lies not so much in the appearance of things, as in the gay spirit behind them.

To me, Australia means the Australians. If I have written of their country with enthusiasm, it is because I have met no other nation with whom I have felt in such close sympathy; and because I liked Australia so very much, I would have everyone from England do the same!

CHAPTER XVI

Two DAYS later we arrived at Adelaide. After a dusty, uninteresting journey by train from the Outer Harbour, the clean, wide, sunny streets struck me as very pleasant. I have a dim recollection of balconies and green shutters, and of a faintly tropical aspect that had been totally lacking in the architecture of Sydney and Melbourne.

As the *Demosthenes* was behind time, we had been unable to accept Sir Tom Bridge's kind invitation to lunch at Government House, but we went to tea there instead. We found our host just as splendid as, during the War, the newspapers had led one to imagine him, and it was easy to understand his popularity with the men, and the devotion he had inspired in them.

We were due to sail the following day at "noon sharp," so no one dared to go far from the ship, and we thought it wiser to refuse the tempting offer of

a drive up Mount Lofty. But, as it turned out, the work of loading wheat took longer than was expected, and we didn't get away till five. A pleasant surprise was the arrival on board of a large case of the most wonderful peaches I have ever seen, which had been ordered for us by a Melbourne friend who wished to prove that *all* the good fruit in Australia was not exported.

We got to Fremantle a few days later, and were met by Mr. Cecil Andrews, the Director of Education, and Mrs. Andrews. They gave us a delightful day, starting with a drive round Perth, luncheon at a woman's club called the Karrakatta, and then another long drive through King's Park, with its grand trees and flaming flowers, and on and up into the Darling Range. The scenery was superb all the way, from the blue Swan River to Kalamunda in the hills. Such a day naturally made us wish we could remain longer in Perth, but the *Demosthenes* sailed again the following evening. In the interval, while we were coaling and loading more wheat, many of the passengers went on to the sands, which were the palest I had yet trodden, and a glorious swim sent us back to the ship with renewed vigour for our deck sports.

Games by day and dancing every evening filled up the next fortnight, and made a very pleasant trip. Though we touched at Durban first, we intended to go on to Capetown, as every one had told us it would be terrifically hot in Durban during the summer. So we only spent a couple of days there, while the ship was in port, though we were to go back for several months later on.

The most striking feature of Durban is the startling appearance of the Zulu ricksha boys. They wear large horns on their heads, fancifully decorated with feathers and tassels, of which they are justly proud, for the strange confections are of their own devising, and each "boy" tries to outdo the others in the outlandishness of his headgear. These ricksha pullers give to the town an exotic aspect as they race through the streets, ringing their handbells and yelling, their horns branching widely, and their leopard skins flying away from their bare, painted legs. Like other visitors, we were duly impressed, and promptly chose the most ferocious-looking Zulu we could find, and went for a ride with him. But in spite of his wild appearance he grinned at us amiably and, when we thought we would play the tourist game thoroughly and have a

snapshot taken, he posed between the shafts of the ricksha with childish pride.

But, on the whole, we didn't enjoy the experience for, until one gets hardened to the custom, it seems barbarous to sit back in comfort and allow another human being to wear his heart out dragging one around. The work of our own bath-chair men, of whom one happily sees fewer now, is bad enough; stooping, feeble old men who could do with a drive themselves. But at least they don't have to run, under a broiling sun. As our Zulu raced along the roads, braking with his legs as we bowled downhill, his black body shone with sweat, and when he stopped at last his chest was heaving with the strain. We were told that many ricksha boys develop bad hearts and die young. Perhaps one day other work will be found for them, and such an uncivilised and degrading form of transport will gradually be abolished in all countries under British control.

Our two days in Durban ended with a dance in the courtyard of our hotel; the blue and yellow lamps among the trees, and the black sky full of brilliant stars, making a romantic setting for our modern uninspired dances.

A few days later we reached Capetown, and

were met on the boat by representatives of Messrs. Maskew Miller, whose thoughtful welcome was only a foretaste of the kindness we were to receive during the year we spent in South Africa. Cape-town is a city that I have heard described in glowing terms by my father ever since I was a small child, but I had never expected to see it. Table Mountain and Adderley Street were already familiar names to me, and it was with a thrill that I saw them both for the first time. I think I should have known Table Mountain even if my father hadn't pointed it out, with a catch in his voice, and I was able to speak of "the tablecloth" as though I were an old resident.

Of course Adderley Street wasn't as we had pictured it, though naturally we were more or less prepared for that. The quaint high stoeps of the old days had disappeared, and the white hansoms with their drivers in conical straw hats were replaced by taxis, with dingy-looking coloured chauffeurs. Malay women, who used to walk down the street in picturesque attire, now wore European dress, though they still retained the black or coloured head cloths. However, it was always Adderley Street! If at first my father's eyes sought wistfully for the

landmarks of old, and he heaved a sigh to their memory, he soon forgave the modern young thoroughfare. Many a time have we strolled along the crowded sunny pavements, with the strains of orchestras floating out to us from the numerous tea-rooms.

Many a stroll, too, in the evening, when Adderley Street is even fuller than by day, and the white people and the Cape-coloured saunter up and down in a tightly packed mass, shop window-gazing together. They share the same pleasure in the brightly lit displays but, though they rub shoulders, the white ignore the coloured, and the coloured usually make way for the white.

But on Sunday evenings Adderley Street seems to be given over to the coloured population, which is then able to spread itself to its heart's content. It parades up and down for hours, laughing loudly and dressed to kill; or else whispering and holding hands, just like couples on a Sunday evening in the streets of any town in England.

When we went into Messrs. Maskew Miller's for the first time, we were given an interesting glimpse into Capetown's past, for they showed us their valuable collection of South African books and pic-

tures. I specially remember a fascinating autograph book that belonged to Lady D'Urban, and a large oil painting of Lady Grey, the wife of a former Governor of the Colony.

We hadn't been in South Africa long before I read the Life of Cecil Rhodes. In Capetown one hears his name mentioned at every turn, and I soon felt ashamed of the sketchiness of my previous knowledge now that I found myself among people who still treasure the smallest detail of their hero's career.

The Rhodes Memorial is unforgettable, and so is the magnificent prospect of mountains, plains and sea that it overlooks. It is easy to understand why this view was so well loved by Rhodes himself and why, when harassed by the million difficulties of empire building, he would come here to regain exaltation of spirit and the courage to pursue his great goal.

Now that I am back in London it seems odd, when walking through Kensington Gardens, to come upon Watts' "Physical Energy," that equestrian statue that I have seen prancing upon a mountain spur in South Africa. The rider, shading his eyes from the sun, looks strangely out of place in

our misty climate to anyone who has seen the original in its grand environment. But that virile figure, scanning a far horizon, should be an inspiration to us Londoners to look beyond the dusty trees and the chimney stacks. One can almost hear his clarion call to us: "See!" There shines your goal. Don't give up striving. Ahead with me!"

One day we went to see "Groote Schuur," the estate that belonged to Rhodes, and was bequeathed by him for the use of all future Prime Ministers of South Africa. As it happened, it was not a resident of Capetown who first showed us this beautiful place, but the late Mr. John Galsworthy and Mrs. Galsworthy, who were also visiting South Africa at that time. We saw a good deal of them during their stay there, and I shall always feel grateful for the good fortune that allowed me to know so great a writer.

They drove us over to Groote Schuur one afternoon, and as we neared the place I had almost my first glimpse of ostriches and wildebeeste. While passing through Rondebosch, my father told us he remembered that road when, instead of a tram route, it had been a peaceful avenue of shimmering silver-trees, with fields of arum-lilies beyond. Sud-

denly he pointed to a house. "But that hasn't gone! That's just the same," he exclaimed. It was a white house with columns and a stoep, and my father had stayed there as a very young man. With quick sympathy, Mr. Galsworthy stopped the car so that we could have a better view. Though it was now a girls' school, the appearance of the fine old house hadn't altered in the least.

From Groote Schuur we went on to the famous homestead of Groote Constantia, which had been almost entirely destroyed by fire a short time before, and was being rebuilt in the original style. From there we drove to Constantia Nek, where we had tea in a picturesque wooden house perched on the side of a mountain and on the fringe of some woods. The view from the garden of that house is indescribable; the majesty of that mountain scenery drenched in sunlight strikes one dumb even in retrospect.

In looking over my diary of our stay in Capetown, I read of a series of drives and picnics, luncheons and dinners; hardly a day passed without our being offered some proof of friendliness. As in America and Australia, people appeared to compete with each other in kindness, and whenever we were

invited to a house, the other guests whom we might be meeting for the first time, would never fail to ask us to their own homes. True hospitality and good breeding that takes the guest of a mutual friend on trust, and doesn't wait for a long acquaintanceship before offering a cup of tea!

In regard to *public* entertaining, my father found more resemblance to New York in South Africa than he had found in Australia. He received many invitations from various clubs and societies in South Africa, though as he always dreads having to make a speech, he was obliged regretfully to decline most of them. However, apart from some broadcasting, he attended a luncheon given him by the University Club of Capetown, which he enjoyed so much that he was able to speak at it without undue trepidation. He also accepted an invitation from the South African branch of the English Association to read one of his stories at the Cathedral Hall.

When the evening came, I think, of the two of us, I was the more nervous, for I knew it was the first time he had ever read in public, and I felt very sorry for him though *he* said he felt sorrier for the audience! When I saw the vast Hall filled with

people I began to quake more than ever, and slid into as inconspicuous a seat as possible. Professor Notcutt was in the chair, and Dr. Van der Hoorst opened the evening by reading a paper on my father's work. After that I felt sure that my poor father would be still more scared at the thought of having to follow anyone so very learned and kind and charming.

The story he had chosen was "The Doll in the Pink Silk Dress," from his volume *A Chair on the Boulevard*, and when eventually he rose, with the book in his hand, I went quite deaf to the opening lines. But gradually I forgot my nervousness, and found myself listening to him with the same absorption as I should have felt if he had been a total stranger. At the risk of being accused of boastfulness, I must say that it was a tremendous success. The Secretary told us later, "We have never heard a reading like that." But to this day I don't think my father quite realises how dramatic and unusual a reading he gave, nor how good an actor he might have become if he hadn't chosen a literary career instead.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BEGINNING of our stay in South Africa was passed at Sea Point, Capetown's only ugly suburb. Or perhaps I should say comparatively plain, as all the others are so exquisitely lovely. They are not in the least "suburban-looking," usually having well-kept paths instead of pavements, and being thickly wooded and ablaze with flowers; while Sea Point itself has little to recommend it except the sea, and one of the best hotels we struck during our travels.

Later on we moved to Kenilworth. It was on the eastern side of Capetown, and near to the homes of many of our new friends. Most of the inhabitants of Capetown live outside the city, their gardens, full of noble old trees, seeming to merge into the glory of the surrounding landscape. These districts are almost entirely residential, hence the visitor is catered for on a very modest scale. No beau-

tiful white hotel here, as at Sea Point, with its terrace and its courtyard, its orchestra and army of Indian waiters. But there are a few boarding houses, comfortable and with pretty gardens. In Australia and South Africa, by the way, people are not ashamed to speak of a boarding house as such, and do not dress it up in gilt letters as a residential hotel.

As my father and I both adore trees we were very glad to find ourselves at Kenilworth, one of the most attractive of the inland suburbs, and we were soon comfortably enough installed in what was one of the oldest houses in those parts. "India House" had originally belonged to the Dutch East India Company, and it possessed a stoep, flowering creeper all over the walls, some venerable fir trees, and a bed of flaming cannas just under our windows. It was a most picturesque place, with an Old World charm, as house agents say in the advertisements. To our regret, we heard recently that it no longer exists, as it was destroyed by fire one Sunday morning while nearly everyone was at church.

During the first weeks of our stay in Capetown I had been impressed chiefly by the magnificent mountain scenery, and by the kindness of every-

body we met, Dutch and English alike. But now, in this old Colonial house, I began to take note of other things; began to feel in closer contact with other aspects of South African life. For instance, in the large restaurant of the hotel at Sea Point, surrounded by scores of fellow-visitors, I had barely remarked the quiet Indian waiters in their white suits and coloured sashes and, beyond admiring their deft service, had regarded them merely as a pleasant feature of our travels. But in this small boarding house we were waited on by Cape-coloured girls; graceful girls with large, liquid eyes and sulky mouths. They would receive their coloured young men at the back door, and go walking with them in the village street. These people formed a part of one's daily life, like the servants at home. There was also the fat Indian washerwoman who waddled through the garden, balancing a big basket of linen on her head. For the first time I definitely realised that I was no longer in a purely white man's country.

Then there was the way people talked. We would all collect on the stoep for a few minutes after breakfast, and when I remarked one morning that I intended to go for a long walk through the

woods, everyone lifted up hands of horror and begged me not to be so rash. "Remember," I was urged, "always keep to the main roads when you are out by yourself. Never turn off into quiet lanes and such like . . . Yes, the walk to the Botanical Gardens is delightful, but always go with someone else—and three is better still . . . also a stick is a useful thing to have with one . . ."

I soon gathered that this was no old-fashioned fussiness, but something serious that must be heeded. Unless obliged to, women in South Africa did not take walks alone, except along frequented roads, and after I had read the papers for a few weeks I understood why. Very few days passed during our stay in Kenilworth without our reading an account of an assault on some woman, usually by a coloured man, much more rarely by a Kaffir. Perhaps she had been taking a short cut through some trees, or walking home from the station after dark. Sometimes there might even be a house quite near; and once I read that two women together were attacked, and when the younger escaped and ran screaming for help, the elder was knocked senseless. Whenever I went into Capetown in the evening without my father, it was understood by everyone

in the house, as much as by him, that I must not walk home from the station alone late at night. If it was impossible for him to meet the last train, other people in the house would usually do so, escorting me up the dark silent lane to our gate. No doubt white women in many parts of the world have to take similar reasonable precautions, but it was my first experience of such an atmosphere, and it needed a little getting used to.

In fact it made a stronger impression on me than I realised at the time, and for a while I had a queer feeling about South Africa. A feeling of danger, not to myself, for I naturally took no risks, but of danger to all the white people in the Union. All those dark faces, the half-castes, Kaffirs, Indians, Zulus; how many dark races were there in this beautiful country? How many white men and women among the hordes of black? I felt that we didn't really belong there, and that one day we should be gone. However, those early impressions soon passed away, abashed perhaps before the stupendous self-assurance of the white population.

From Kenilworth we went into Capetown nearly every day by train, and the short journey was like traveling through a succession of gardens.

Rondebosch, Claremont, Newlands—the green and wooded landscape was hardly disturbed by the pretty flowery railway stations. But never have I taken a dirtier journey, though I believe the trains have been improved recently. During the short run, smuts would pour in through the windows in such quantities that many women took wraps in order to cover their light dresses, or else spread newspapers over their laps. By the way, in this connection I learnt to speak correctly of "smuts" and not of "blacks," as to a South African "blacks coming in at the windows" conveys a picture of Kaffirs storming the train!

There was of course plenty to see in Capetown, and gradually we "did" the usual sights, and many others besides. The Koopmans-De Wet Museum remains in my memory as something utterly different from most museums. The rooms have been arranged just as if the family were still living there. From the moment one mounts the high stoep, and passes through the door with its quaint fanlight, one is transported into a previous century, and one has the illusion of paying a call at a private house whose owner happens to be absent. It is easy to imagine that old sea captain, who after years of voyaging to

the Dutch East Indies, settled in this house which he had built on the model of those in Batavia that he knew so well. It is easy to imagine the sound of his heavy footsteps on the Batavian tiles of his dining-room, and to picture the Dutch women busy with the kettles and cake-moulds that still stand on the kitchen hearth.

Of course I went to see the models of the Hottentots and Bushmen in the South African Museum. They are most interesting, the casts having been taken, piece by piece, from the living people. No visitor to Capetown should fail to see these—if only because of the truly amazing figures of the Hottentot ladies!

Sometimes my father and I would look in at the Public Library which has a fine collection of valuable books. In one large room students would be sitting at the tables, intently reading; they came daily and worked for hours in the quiet atmosphere of the solemn room, apparently never distracted by the sunshine and trees of the Municipal Gardens that could be seen through the tall windows.

Those Municipal Gardens of Capetown! How exquisite they are! We grew to love every inch of them; the lawns and the winding paths; the per-

golas almost bending beneath their load of blooms, and the lovely nooks and corners that you come upon unexpectedly. If you want absolute peace the best spot is the circular space near the replica of the Bell Tower of Elsenburg that, in olden days, used to summon slaves to work. It stands up tall and white among the dark trees, and near-by is a small aviary, which I hope has not been done away with since we left. If you want brightness and gaiety, go to the open air tea place about eleven o'clock and sit down at one of the tables in the shade. There you will see students from the University taking their morning refreshment, the boys generally in large groups by themselves, and the girls in small parties of their own. They chatter and laugh and sip their tea or bovril, and stroll bareheaded about the Gardens.

Among the many trees from various lands that grow in these Gardens, my favorite was a magnificent Blue Gum from Australia, the first of its kind ever planted in South Africa. It stands imposingly in a central position, dominating the lawns and the paths and the blazing flower beds, as a king might stand surveying his domain. The branches spread themselves proudly against the blue sky, and the

superb limbs have a rosy glow, as though the noble heart were diffusing warmth throughout the whole tree.

We always found that a stroll through the streets of Capetown was full of interest, for the city has many distinctive features. The flower sellers, their baskets brimming over with vivid colour, clustering at each end of Trafalgar Place; vendors of fruit and vegetables making house to house calls, their wares slung on poles across their shoulders, or balanced on their heads. At a street corner one might see an Indian woman buying peanuts, carefully untying her money from a handkerchief; and up and down the famous Government Avenue coloured nursemaids wheeling white babies about, and girl students in their gowns, hurrying on their way to lectures. The only unpleasant feature of our walks was the deafening noise of motor horns, nearly all on the same shrill note. The streets of Capetown reverberate with the maddening din, but the coloured chauffeurs themselves appear to enjoy it, and will dash along empty roads hooting incessantly.

A much less unpleasant noise was that of the little iron funnels blown by the fish sellers as they drive round the town in search of customers. It is a

strange sound, a slow, plaintive wail that haunts one, like a voice from under the sea—the lament of the fish-folk perhaps.

One morning, while sauntering through the steep, narrow streets of the native quarter, threading my way among fowls and goats, I came upon a Malay mosque. It was a Friday, and the congregation was assembling. I mounted the steps too, and was allowed to sit on a bench just inside the door. I was the only woman present, as no Malay women were permitted to attend the service.

I believe there are several mosques in Capetown, but this particular one in Chiappini Street was being rebuilt, and inside it was very shabby. Also it presented some curious contrasts. A painting of some old Eastern shrine hung on a wall, and beside it ticked a very modern clock. Propped against the preacher's throne stood a large feather broom. During the solemn service little Malay girls would peer in through the dirty window, and two or three small boys would steal in as far as my bench, and beg from me mutely with extended palm. Or they would stand joking together in whispers, and one, more venturesome than the others, even dared to

tiptoe across to the praying-rugs while his elders were absorbed in their devotions. One couldn't help feeling a sneaking sympathy with his spirit of mischief.

But all these interruptions were unimportant, and could not detract from the interest of the scene. One by one the worshippers arrived, taking off their boots or wooden sandals, as the case might be, and leaving them in the entrance. Not until this was done, did anyone approach the praying-rugs spread on the floor; and those who wore no socks first went out by a side door to wash their bare feet. Then, decorously, they discarded their coats and trousers, and enveloped themselves in long coloured robes. How much better their turban or their fez became them, once the European clothes were shed!

And now beauty dawned in the shabby mosque. Gradually the floor glowed with colour. Purple, red, orange and green, the robed figures mingled, now erect, with their clasped hands raised to the East, then sinking down to pray. But what I remember most vividly was the culmination of the service—that instant when the throng surged for-

ward *en masse* to surround the preacher, and next when the scores of knees thudded to the floor in unison.

After descending the steps amongst that brilliantly clad crowd, it seemed strange to come back into European Capetown, with its trams, its tea-rooms and its bioscopes—cinemas, by the way, are still spoken of as bioscopes in South Africa. Though I was re-entering my own world, my mind was still filled with the colour and glamour of the world I had just left, and it was difficult to realise that only a few streets divided the two. Every Friday, over the heads of an unheeding white population, drifts the call to prayer from the Malay mosques; and every Sunday the Malays hear indifferently the bells of the Christian churches, English and Dutch, peal out their summons. So the urgent voices call, the loud-tongued bells ring, and men raise their eyes to the sky, where all prayers meet, imploring the same things from God or Allah.

Life in Capetown contains many outdoor recreations, such as picnics, tennis and drives, but of them all I think I most enjoyed the bathing and surfing. Muizenberg is one of the best spots along the coast for this pastime, and every Sunday morning crowds

of young people meet on the sands and spend as carefree, healthy and jolly a time as it is possible to imagine. One evening I took a walk with two other girls along the shore from Muizenberg. We went on and on beside the sparkling waves, barefoot over the warm white sand. Presently there was a gorgeous sunset, and while admiring it we went farther than we had intended, and as we had left our shoes and stockings near a heap of seaweed a long way behind, we felt the sand grow clammier and clammier as we plodded back in the evening light. We were relieved to reach the parade again before nightfall, and we decided later that we had been silly girls, as we hadn't met a soul for about two hours, and in a country like South Africa it was a much lonelier walk than we ought to have taken.

There are two or three days which stand out particularly brightly in my memories of Capetown. That day, for instance, that we spent with Lord and Lady De Villiers at their well-known farm "Rustenberg." A friend drove us there by way of Stellenbosch and Paarl, and I don't think I can ever forget the charm of those two historic old towns; gabled houses, the streets thickly lined with oaks,

their shadows playing on the sunny white walls. Indeed, my father promptly fell in love with Paarl, and had a passing fancy to settle there for life!

The beautiful house of "Rustenberg" is early Eighteenth century, and the steps leading to the front door are made of *klompjes*. We had luncheon in the garden, when I tasted persimmons for the first time, and found them delicious, and later Lord De Villiers showed us over the farm itself. The old vineyards have all been uprooted, by Lady De Villiers' wishes, as she is a strong believer in Prohibition, so now it is chiefly a fruit farm, though tobacco is also grown. We saw some of the tobacco leaves drying over wooden frames in the sun. The huge dim shed where the fruit is packed, and the picture of "Rustenberg" branded on each case, were most fascinating, and I still possess a copy of that picture.

Then there was the morning I went to Young's Field at Wynberg before breakfast, to see four aeroplanes start for a flight to Grahamstown. Only a few people had risen early enough to see them off, but among them was Lord Athlone, who had ridden over from Capetown to wish them luck before

they started. They went off into the blue, and for a moment I recaptured some of the exhilaration of the one and only flight I have ever had, and which nothing has ever equalled. Such keen pure joy, and a glad renewing of one's energies! Above all, such a strange triumphant feeling of being in one's rightful element at last. Only those who have been up will understand what I mean.

There was also that exciting day when I climbed Table Mountain. Many people in Capetown spend their Sundays hiking and climbing, and one meets them on the roads with sticks and rücksacks, tired, dusty, but thoroughly happy. There are many ways up Table Mountain, but as I had never done anything of the kind before, my friends kindly chose the easiest route. Even then it was stiff going, partly up the dry bed of a waterfall, where we had to use our hands as well as our feet, until we reached the top of what is pessimistically called Skeleton Gorge. I cannot give the usual rapturous account of the marvellous prospect that unfolded itself before our startled gaze, as thick banks of mist obscured our view, and we saw nothing whatever to reward us for our labours. Yet we had the sensa-

tion of altitude, and knew that the city we had left a few hours earlier lay hidden and remote beneath that blanket of haze.

As it had begun to rain slightly, we took shelter among some rocks facing a large reservoir, and there we made a fire and ate our luncheon. Here all sense of altitude left one temporarily. Overlooking that reservoir, with nothing else in view but rocks, one might have been down by the coast, sitting on the shore of a calm and misty sea.

The descent, which I was told is often worse than the climb, was perfectly easy as we came down by the Bridle Path, and we finished, as we had begun, by way of the beautiful Botanic Gardens at Kirstenbosch. On the last lap of the road, in the sunset, we saw a coloured family gathered outside its cottage on the fringe of a pine wood. The women were cooking the evening meal, the blue smoke from the fire rising peacefully among the shadowy trees, behind which flamed a crimson sky.

Then back at last into Kenilworth, a pink light still lingering on white houses, the grass giving out that vivid green only seen at sunset, and all the mountains purple, like plums with the bloom on them.

CHAPTER XVIII

Soon after this, as the weather was turning wet, we decided to go back to Durban for the winter. I don't recollect much about the journey except that we passed through the Karoo by night, and that as we neared Natal magnificent views opened out among the mountain ranges.

The ricksha boys again offered us a fantastic welcome to Durban. One doesn't easily forget the sight of them racing along the roads, their garments of skins flapping as they run; nor, at the end of the trip, the broad smile that flashes from under their ornamental horns, in return for the modest sum they charge.

The day after we arrived my father had to deliver a speech at a Rotary Club luncheon, so I began by exploring the city alone. The picturesque element, which naturally appeals so strongly to the visitor from England, is much more pronounced in

Durban than in Capetown. In the latter place Kaffirs and half-castes had abounded, most of them wearing shabby European clothes. But in Durban Indians and Zulus in native dress predominated, lending an exotic note even to prosaic streets.

It is strange indeed to see Zulu women draped in dark red blankets, and often with babies slung on their backs, sauntering casually about among modern traffic. They have walked from their kraals in the surrounding country, to take monthly toll of their husbands' wages. Women, black or white, must have money for housekeeping. These women dress their hair in a very curious fashion; they plaster it with the red soil of Natal, then mould the mess into a sort of Leaning Tower of Pisa—and the higher the tower, the prouder of it the women appear to be. This style of hairdressing informs the world that its wearer is married.

Among the usual awkward, bustling crowds of white people, one meets Indian women walking calmly and superbly, with large loads balanced on their heads. Unlike the Portuguese peasant women, they seldom lift a hand to hold their burden; and it is a pleasure to watch them swinging gracefully

along, their brilliant draperies flowing around their feet.

The native police, on the other hand, swagger up and down with an obvious pride in their status. They wear smart uniforms, but go barefoot; and, though armed with knobkerries, they smile genially at the passers-by.

We could seldom take a walk in Durban without coming across some incident full of colour and interest. A Zulu woman, for instance, whose coiffure has become disarranged, sitting on the curbstone of a busy street while a girl friend fixes it for her as unconcernedly as if they were in their own kraal. In another street, ignored by the fashionable crowd, squats the huddled filthy form of a witch-doctor. A strange, uncanny figure, with his long hair and fanatic's face. Backed by the plate-glass windows of expensive shops, he mounts guard over his loathesome array of dry herbs and bones. Yet he too has his customers.

Once an unusually arresting incident occurred. A man, disguised as an enormous black cat about nine feet high, followed by some small boys garbed as kittens, paraded the town in order to advertise a

certain commodity. The procession, like characters in a pantomime, paced the streets slowly. Suddenly, at the sight of the gigantic cat, a Zulu workman uttered a cry of horror. Then, brandishing his spade, he rushed forward yelling, valiantly resolved to rid the world of this monstrous foe. He was fortunately prevented.

At street corners we would come upon groups of natives and Indians gambling at the shell-and-pea game. Recklessly they staked five, and often ten shillings at a time, and sometimes even a pound. The Indian presiding at the game usually dropped into English as soon as he saw a European approaching, and tried hard to induce him to join in. One even went to the length of thrusting money into our hands, in the hope of luring us to play.

In the Berea, the pretty residential district of Durban, Zulu house-boys dash about on bicycles. It is quite thrilling to see one of these boys speeding downhill, his exultation in the swift motion bursting forth in a wild chant of joy. For an instant, as he flashes through the placid suburb, one catches a breath of something savage and free.

We found the Zulus in Durban more attractive than the Indians. There is something simple and

childlike about a Zulu that claims one's sympathy; his smile is spontaneous and wholehearted, and he has the same unconsciously touching air of doing his best that one might see in a big black, well-meaning but rather stupid dog. And yet—is he stupid? To watch a house-boy turning out a room, is to see the job done quite as efficiently as it would be by a white servant. So well done, in fact, that one is apt to forget that the boy has been brought up in a hut in a kraal, and that even such simple implements as a dustpan and brush must seem foreign to him.

One does not of course realise all this until one knows them better. The entrance of a tall strapping black man into one's hotel bedroom, dressed only in a white tunic and shorts, is at first startling. It takes some time to get used to the sight of him padding barefoot about the room, and instinctively and foolishly one dislikes seeing his black hands smoothing out the pillows. But one gets used to anything, and without doubt the Zulus are on the whole clean and trustworthy.

As a proof of their natural honesty, we were told that in the early days, if there was a letter to be delivered by hand, the best thing to do was to enclose

a few coins with it. The fact that there was money in the letter impressed the boy with its importance and, far from tempting him to steal, ensured its safe delivery.

Another anecdote shows how unsophisticated in the ways of town life a Zulu can still be: while we were in Durban we read in the newspaper of a boy who, for several weeks, had been painstakingly posting his master's letters in a fire alarm.

The Indians in the hotels have nothing to do with the bedrooms, but remain downstairs as waiters. Very excellent waiters they make; nimble, silent and intelligent. But, though I may be quite mistaken, the majority of them did not give me the impression of being trustworthy, like the Zulus, or even very clean, in spite of their spotless white suits and bright sashes.

As I said, it is the picturesque features of Durban that inevitably make the deepest impression on visitors, but they leave most of the residents completely cold—although even the most hardened habitué seems to retain a soft spot in his heart for his rickshas. The memory of the Indian and native quarters, brimful of fascination and interest, remains with me vividly, while it is already an effort

to recall insipid West Street, with its untidy skyline, and its Saturday crowds of women meeting each other for morning tea. Now and then one comes across someone who knows how to appreciate the really attractive features of his city; but the attitude of the majority is expressed by the words of a lady who took exception to my saying that the native quarter was the most interesting part of Durban. She exclaimed: "Oh, how horrid of you! Don't you like West Street?"

Incredibly close to this characterless thoroughfare lies the Indian market, where piles of fruit glow in its golden dusk, and little girls in green trousers gaze longingly at Indian sweetmeats. Here is East, and there is West, and daily the twain must meet, for many Europeans buy provisions in this market. Bombay, Calcutta and all Kipling seem to be concentrated in this mysterious, serried, dirty but enchanting region of gliding figures and magical names. How tame is shopping in London compared with entering a store kept by Ramjee Mahomed Abed!

To stroll through the native beer-hall is a revelation in noise. Hundreds of Zulus congregate there, and their Zulu tongues clack hard. Over mugs of

weak and dingy liquid the talk grows fast and furious. After paying threepence or sixpence at the ticket office, each customer enters the shed with an air of social expectancy, like a man coming in to his club. His beverage secured, he joins his friends, and the din grows louder still.

In startling contrast is the comparative silence of the native eating-house. Here men sit seriously at the long tables before plates full of dense soup, and dishes piled high with stuffed dumplings and meat. The meals are cooked over charcoal fires and the service, though rough, seems very efficient. In the half-light the horns of the ricksha boys loom weirdly, each head suggesting that of some impossible beast seen dimly in a dream.

In common with most sightseers, I bought one day a shield in the native market. Shields are no longer used for war, but only for hunting, and there are some of a very small size that are borne when the native goes "courting." One wonders if Zulu girls defend themselves with fists and finger nails that their lovers need to woo with shields!

The one I chose was large, and I asked the genial Zulu at the stall to show me how it should be carried. Promptly he stepped forth from the shelter of

his stall and proceeded to give a dramatic demonstration of the chase. Stalking up and down the length of the market with uplifted arms, he wielded a stick, striking it with force upon another, and uttering blood-curdling cries. Faster he pranced, wilder grew the yells, until with a final blow the stick was shattered and he stopped, panting but triumphant.

CHAPTER XIX

A FEW PAGES back I spoke of the Berea as being placid. Placid it is, but it is other things as well. Every garden is filled with brilliant flowers. Poinsettias, bougainvillias and kafir-bloom blaze around one, and golden shower drips overhead. In this otherwise restrained and very English district, these exotic flowers seem as startling as would be an outbreak of some passionate, barbaric chorus on the lawn of Government House.

The climb to the Berea is too steep for the rickshaw boys, but when we were in Durban one went by tram, though we found the journey by no means a joy-ride, for the conductor's method of signalling to the driver was maddening. Instead of pulling the bell cord, he sounded shrill brain-piercing blasts on a whistle while he sauntered among the passengers snipping their tickets.

Also in the Berea, this exclusive residential quar-

ter, there were no pavements when we were there. The pedestrian, on her way to pay a call, had to walk in the road among whizzing cars and clanging trams. Here and there she might take refuge on a few feet of footpath, so sandy that she wouldn't have been surprised to meet a camel; but during the greater part of the walk she was obliged to hop over stones and plod through piles of dust. Hopping and plodding, she would arrive at her friend's front door footsore and flushed where, alas, she wouldn't often find, as at the Cape where it was not so necessary, a welcome feather brush to whisk from her shoes the traces of her terrible trek.

Such trifles do not mar the general excellence of Durban. I have memories of days of perfect sunshine, always tempered by a cool breeze; of bathing and tennis and drives, and of much hospitality among those flaming flowers of the Berea. Most mornings were spent in the open-air swimming pool, where I used to be much impressed by the mangle which was provided free of charge for the odious job of wringing out one's bathing costume. It was here that the instructress waylaid me one day with the remark: "Excuse me, but you have been in Australia, haven't you?" It turned out, not that I had

met her there, but that she had recognised my bathing cap as being uniquely a product of Australia. She herself had tried to procure similar caps in South Africa, but found they were unobtainable; nor have I seen any like them in England. That cap is still as good as new, and is the most satisfactory I have ever had for keeping the hair dry.

The Parade was always a lively scene, with crowds of people bathing and shouting in the sunshine, or sipping drinks on the verandahs of the numerous hotels that face the sea. In the evenings that part of the front called Luna Park is brilliantly illuminated, and there you could find most of the fun of the fair: cocoanut shies, "hot dogs," and young ladies in crimson pyjamas who fell out of bed when you threw a ball at them.

Of course we often went to the Valley of a Thousand Hills, as it is Durban's one famous drive. The panorama, when you get there, is sublime, but we sometimes missed the lovely, varied and sympathetic scenery of the Cape. A favourite jaunt of ours was to Riverside, which had not then become so sophisticated, and where there were some delightfully mischievous wild monkeys. They leap from the trees on to your car, and take bananas from

your hand. We were told that one old monkey would even lift the lid of a glass case full of bananas and extract the contents. At last a padlock was put on the case, but still she managed to get at the bananas. I don't know if her prowess was exaggerated, but certainly those monkeys were the nimblest, liveliest little creatures imaginable.

While I am mentioning various aspects of Durban, I cannot omit the Art Gallery. Not that we found anywhere in South Africa that keen interest in art among the general public that had so delighted us in Australia, and we were struck by the scarcity of exhibitions, which in Melbourne had been held so frequently. But I remember going to a Private View that was interesting, as it was the first time a collection of pictures by artists from the whole of South Africa had ever been held in Durban. The exhibition was held by the newly established South African Institute of Art, and was opened by Lord Athlone in the Wool Mart.

As I don't pretend to know much about pictures, I won't attempt to describe those in the Art Gallery, but among the good collection of etchings upstairs is one that is unforgettable. It is of French prisoners in a German Camp, and is by Jean Lau-

rent. The faces of two of those Frenchmen haunt me still. The men stand close to the barbed wire, staring through, not with despair in their eyes for they have passed beyond despair, but with an almost animal lack of thought. Obviously they can no longer remember the past, and all they have lost; they have even forgotten that they ever possessed; a faint bewilderment is all that remains, for their minds are nearly gone. Photographs of that picture should hang in every Council Chamber of Europe, to remind Ministers before they decide for War, that it is to this, among other horrors, that they will be condemning men.

We found that Durban was a curious mixture, at once more foreign and more English than Capetown—more foreign in appearance, and more English in its social atmosphere. Perhaps because it possesses a University, Capetown has a larger intellectual set, after allowing for the fact that Durban is a smaller place. In Capetown, where there is a cosmopolitan outlook, I never felt cut off from the rest of the world, nor almost alone in my interest in outside news. In Durban I often felt hemmed in by purely local concerns. In Capetown, on the other hand, I felt mentally stimulated. But for kind-

ness and hospitality to the stranger, there is no shade of difference between the two cities.

One of the impressions that linger with me is my first glimpse of the Old Fort, and its most wonderful garden. I went to that garden many times for, though it used to be waste land, it is now a thing of beauty, a little green gem. It is from this fort that Dick King made his famous ride to Grahamstown in 1842, to get relief for the garrison besieged there by the Boers. The old magazine is now a little chapel, and what was the cook-house is a pretty fernery. The garden is full of many varieties of trees and plants, and yet it has a delightful simplicity, and is perfectly in keeping with the age of the fort. Everyone, after passing an hour in this haven of peace, must realise something of the loving care bestowed on it by Colonel Molyneux its creator. The ideal that conceived it touches one's heart.

In connection with the Fort there is a pleasing legend. It is said that whoever sits in the white and gold armchair once occupied by Queen Mary when she was "Princess May," will one day be transformed into a Princess herself.

Looking back on our stay in Durban, I recollect several days particularly clearly. There was that

hot afternoon when we were among the few white people to witness Shembe's Dance, among the hills near Inanda; and that time when we saw the native wedding in the moonlight. The dance was a religious one, invented by Shembe, a popular native prophet, who is supposed to have effected many cures. Most of the men and women wore blue and white robes for the occasion; dodged-up clothes, the men's a kind of kilt with a long white shirt. They seemed immensely proud of their unusual attire, though to our eyes their appearance was merely grotesque. The men and women did not dance together, but took it in turns, to the accompaniment of bells and drums. Shembe himself, a dignified figure in dark, striped robes, sat among some of his followers, and at one time carried on an ethical discussion with a South African missionary. The most arresting figures there were the *impis*, tall fine men, with large feathered headdresses and girdles of fur. But even among them an incongruous note was struck by the closed black umbrellas that they carried in a haughty manner, redolent of the Regency bucks with their high canes.

Later in the afternoon we went to the near-by kraal, and inspected the hut that Chief Solomon

used when he visited that village. It was perfectly clean and almost unfurnished, though it boasted the luxury of a camp-bed. As we were leaving, several women who were squatting outside another hut offered us some tea, but as it would apparently have meant drinking it out of the one family tin mug, we declined the invitation.

The native wedding we came upon by chance. Friends were driving us back from Ilova Beach when, from a grassy hollow near the roadside, we heard sounds of chanting. Getting out of the car, we went to investigate, and there, in the light of the rising moon, we saw a young Zulu couple being married. Crowds of their friends and relations were gathered round, and when they saw us some of them, including the bride and bridegroom, came up for money, and some asked us to shake hands with them. As a detail, we noticed with amusement that one old man carried his pipe conveniently tucked into his armlet, though by this time we had become quite used to the sight of Zulus walking about with horn spoons in their hair. The ceremony seemed to consist chiefly of a long speech by an official, shouted at the top of his voice, to which the bride

listened solemnly, a girl attending on each side of her. After that she had to take a long walk up and down hills through the surrounding country, followed by the girls—perhaps as a sign that she would follow her husband wherever he might go! While she took her walk, the men continued dancing, talking and pretending to fight. We wished we could have understood all the details of the ceremony, but even as it was it proved a most interesting spectacle. Those dark figures, dancing and singing in the early moonlight, made a striking picture of primitive Africa.

We would have liked to stay there longer, but later on, when the native beer began to flow, the real fighting, among other things, would probably start, and the scene would grow hectic.

We were told that the Zulus are, according to their lights, a very moral race, adultery in a married woman, for instance, being practically unknown. On the other hand, we were also told that if a distinguished visitor should arrive in a village, he would probably be offered, as a mark of hospitality, a young lady to keep him company during the night. She, on her side, would regard such an epi-

sode merely as an act of kindness to a stranger, and it would in no way spoil her chances of marriage in the future.

In driving about the country near Durban one is continually enthralled by the scenes of native life that one passes. From the kraals, the inhabitants dash out to watch the car go by, and the children wave and shout just like village children everywhere. One thing that always struck me as a great proof of natural modesty was the long stiff pinafores made of, I think, leather, that are worn by the women when they are with child, and at no other time. Occasionally one catches a glimpse of Indian women washing clothes in a stream, whacking them on the stones; and along the roads one meets Zulus of all ages. Fine strapping youths, women with babies on their backs, the little comic heads and large eyes peeping over the edge of the red blanket; incredibly old people and tiny children, all trudging barefoot mile after mile through the white dust and the heat.

CHAPTER XX

One day I realised a lifelong ambition and saw a whale. I went by tram and ferry to the Bluff, and was lucky enough to find a beauty laid out on a vast trolley, ready to be towed to the factory. Pictures of whales had not really prepared me for the colossal proportions of these monsters, and seen in the actual flesh they are amazing. Like the little girl at the Zoo, who was shown a giraffe for the first time, I felt like saying: "It isn't true!" Its grey skin, looking like oiled silk, was already beginning to peel and hang in tatters. Inside the vast open mouth was what appeared to be a doormat of black bristles, and on this mat, within the enormous dark cavern formed by the ferocious jaws, people were sitting to have their photographs taken. The primitive triumph of puny man over a conquered giant! For a moment imagination ran wild, and as the cameras clicked I pictured the sudden closing of

those wicked jaws, entombing forever the laughing faces, as a dog snaps up flies.

A few days later I passed an afternoon of a very different kind. At a garden party at King's House I had the interesting experience of meeting Mr. Sastri, the Indian Government agent, who had just arrived in South Africa. Being the first educated Indian I had ever spoken to, I was surprised at the excellence of his English. A few evenings later I was even more surprised when I heard him deliver a lecture in the Town Hall, on "Indian Society." It was a most enlightening lecture.

A more exciting time at the Town Hall was one evening when General Smuts spoke there. I had been presented to him that afternoon at an At Home given for him by the South African Party Club, and it was a case, on my side, of admiration at first sight. I had never before met anyone who impressed me with possessing such boundless mental energy. He was not merely charming, he was dynamic. I am not paying him these compliments because he told me he had read all my father's books, but because to listen to him was a thrilling quarter of an hour's education. I shall always remember it.

During General Smuts' speech, rowdy elements among the Nationalists caused some excitement by making as much disturbance outside the Town Hall as possible. They yelled and booed, and hurled themselves against the heavy doors, trying to force their way in. But police and voluntary helpers, by dashing from one door to another of the hall, succeeded in keeping them at bay.

One other lecture we went to hear before we left Durban for Johannesburg. It was a lantern lecture given by Mr. Leonard Flemming, who had already invited us to go to stay with him on his farm. Having read in his book, *The Call of the Veld*, all about the making of that farm, and the beautiful account of how he planted thousands of trees where no tree had ever been seen before, we were naturally eager to accept such an invitation. But alas, before we could do so, there was a disastrous fire one night at the farm, and its owner sat on a log till morning, alone, watching the destruction of the home he had built. But with characteristic pluck, Mr. Flemming decided to start again, and reconstruct a new homestead on the ashes of the old.

I recall vividly one of my last expeditions from Durban. It was to Mariannhill, to see the

Monastery there, and it proved to be one of the most interesting places I have ever seen. About three hundred and fifty native families live on its grounds, which amount to about eight hundred acres. The Trappist monks, who are mostly German, teach the children, and employ the young men in their workshops. The monks and the natives between them make everything. The church and the houses have not only been built by them, but they made all the bricks and the stained-glass windows themselves. They also do all their own carving, painting and metal-work; and run their own farm, school, and a weekly newspaper printed in Zulu.

On the outside of the church are two medallions, done in vegetable paints so as to withstand the weather. I was told that the monk responsible for them had studied Bushman paintings for a long time, trying to learn the secret of their permanence. He even went so far as to live for two months in a Bushman cave, in order to examine thoroughly the primitive pictures on its walls. He has now discovered what must have been the ingredients of those early pigments, and has demonstrated them successfully on the walls of his beloved church. Inside, most of

the pictures have been done by the natives, and one in particular struck me by its realism. Behind the altar, against a curved wall hung, apparently, a thick curtain, suspended from a brass rail; it was only when close to it that one perceived it was only painted upon the wall.

In one of the workshops that I passed through, a monk with the face of an artist was working happily at some stained glass; and I was also shown the little museum of the Monastery, in which there is an excellent collection of insects, butterflies and bottled snakes. There were, too, some exquisite jewelled headdresses from Russia, some old English and French clocks, and a fascinating early geography of the world. It was a heavy leather-bound volume, printed in German, and dated 1589. Among the old maps, sprinkled over with their quaint little figures and houses, I made the foolish mistake of looking for that then undiscovered continent, Australia.

It was soon after this that we went up to Johannesburg and, though we were looking forward immensely to seeing that city, we were very sorry to leave all the kind friends we had made in Durban. Our memories of Durban make a curious

mixture; fantastic-looking ricksha boys; delicious paw-paw salad and *naatje* marmalade; witch doctors and whales; Zulus patiently plodding along dusty roads; and our friends passing their pleasant days on the peaceful Berea, ministered to by their dark servants—surrounded by them, and by the barbaric, blazing flowers.

CHAPTER XXI

YEARS AGO, I won't say how many, when my father visited South Africa as a boy, there was no Johannesburg. It simply didn't exist. Today it is not only a busy, flourishing city, but we found there as fashionable a social life as in New York, and a hospitality as great.

I shall always think of Johannesburg as the place where I began by having such a tremendously good time, but couldn't keep it up. For although invitations poured in as rapidly as in America, the climate didn't agree with us, and we were forced to decline quite half of them. We had been warned that newcomers to Johannesburg often find the climate trying, even getting slight palpitation of the heart until they become accustomed to the altitude. There is only one other city, somewhere in South America, we were told, that has a similar combination of altitude and temperature. We didn't get

palpitations, but one of our symptoms was extreme depression, rendering us quite unfit to accept all the invitations. I can recall a day when things reached a climax and, due to attend a luncheon party at Lady Albu's, I took to my bed and wept instead, leaving my poor father to explain and apologise on the telephone as best he could. However, we managed to do a good deal during our stay, and the more we saw and did, the more we wished we could see and do everything!

The day after we arrived, we went to a big luncheon at the Country Club, given by Mr. Lewis Rose Macleod, the editor of the *Rand Daily Mail*. This club is an exceptionally charming place; it used to be a farm, and the grounds, though brought up-to-date with tennis courts and an open-air swimming pool, somehow still manage to preserve the suavity of age. That luncheon, served on the stoep, in lovely surroundings by perfect, silent-footed waiters, was typical of all the functions that we went to in Johannesburg. It may be a new city, but its inhabitants bring to their entertaining a graciousness and a mellow refinement that are all too rare these days.

That night, shortly before one o'clock, there was an earth tremor. It consisted of three severe shakes, and two smaller ones. The newspapers described it the following day as the worst tremor the city had ever felt. I can't pretend that it was a terrifying experience; the first three shakes were distinctly unpleasant, and startling to a stranger, but the others resembled the vibrations made by Underground trains in some parts of London. However, the hotel rocked, and the water leapt up and down in the bottles, and I felt I was getting the full benefit of foreign travel. The residents assure one that these earth tremors are only caused by subsidence in the mines, and that they are nothing in the nature of real earthquakes.

The next morning the late Sir Julius Jeppe, whom we had met at the Country Club the previous day, kindly took me to the races at Turfontein. It was one of the most enjoyable meetings I have ever been to, and at luncheon, to which he invited about thirty people, we were a merry crowd. Beyond the track could be seen some of the famous mine dumps, though the view of them was too close to be very effective. These dumps are quite a feature

of the scenery; they are whitish-grey, changing in certain lights to pink or green. Though we didn't see them often enough to fall under their spell, as everyone else seemed to have done, yet we could well believe that they are fascinating in rather a weird way. One of the best-known persons in Johannesburg remarked to us one day that mining there "is not a business but a religion." Viewed in that light, the dumps might appear to loom over the city like grim idols, their worshippers swarming at their feet.

One day we went for a drive with Mrs. Sarah Gertrude Millin, and on the way back she stopped the car to show us a wonderful view of the city and the dumps from the top of Hospital Hill. Another thing that my father never ceased to admire and marvel at was the extraordinarily mature appearance of the suburbs of Johannesburg. New as they are, newer even than the city itself, they yet have a ripe and gentle look; soft-toned houses peacefully reposing in their green gardens.

It was of course a great privilege for me to know Mrs. Millin and her husband, the advocate. I had read, and never forgotten, *The South Africans*—

that book which my father always swears will be read for generations to come—but I had never expected to see even a small piece of South Africa with the author herself.

Another friend who gave us a good time was Mr. Sam Alexander, though we didn't feel fit enough to face all the festivities he wanted to arrange for us. Mr. Alexander is well-known for his lavish hospitality to visitors to Johannesburg, and also for his unique collection of old liqueurs. He has some that are very rare and precious, such as, to mention only two, an original Green Chartreuse which is probably unprocurable now, and a marvellous Dutch cordial of the Eighteenth Century. They stand in rows, those old liqueurs, in bottles quaint and beautiful; they glitter and glow and allure; golden and green and amethyst, they are like shining gems with hearts of fire.

Soon after our arrival we were invited to witness a native War Dance in the compound of the City Deep Mine, and it proved to be a remarkable spectacle. The dancers, Kaffir labourers from the mine, threw themselves whole-heartedly into the performance, and obviously enjoyed it all hugely.

They dressed up for the occasion in an incongruous mixture of fur, feathers and football jerseys. One man, a stout smiling native, did his utmost to attract all the applause to himself. Gorgeously arrayed in fur, with enormous white and orange plumes nodding on his head, he would prance into the centre of the compound at every opportunity, bowing and beaming to right and left, and performing antics entirely of his own accord. He was known as "Brandy," and he appeared to possess a natural gift for low comedy. The orchestra consisted of Kaffir pianos, and very effective they were.

The War Dance itself, in which two lines of men faced each other, was truly thrilling, especially towards the climax. Holding aloft their large shields, brandishing their spears and yelling war-cries, they rushed forward, swayed back, then forward again. As they charged to within a few feet of the handful of white people watching them, their spear points gleamed wickedly in the sunlight and the earth literally shook to the savage thunder of their bare feet. It seems almost a pity to spoil the picture by adding that the spear heads were imitation.

The following evening, the P. E. N. Club gave a dinner to my father, and I was invited too. It was the Club's inaugural dinner and was held at the Carlton Hotel. Mr. Lewis Rose Macleod was in the Chair, and Mrs. Sarah Gertrude Millin had arranged the whole thing so perfectly that it turned out to be one of the most enjoyable functions we had ever attended. Mr. J. H. Hofmeyer came from Pretoria especially to attend the dinner, and very kindly made an impromptu speech. Later, when the ordeal of making his own speech was successfully passed, my father was able to enjoy the rest of the evening to the full, and we wished we could have other opportunities of seeing more of all those kind and interesting people.

But as it happened, this dinner proved to be almost the last festivity we enjoyed in Johannesburg, as soon afterwards my father developed influenza very badly. Nothing could have been greater than the friendliness shown us by everyone at that time, but we resolved to return to Capetown as soon as he was better, instead of trying to get accustomed to the climate of Johannesburg. At last he seemed well enough to travel and all arrangements were

made, including the reservation of two coupés on the Union Limited, when suddenly I went down with influenza too, and everything had to be cancelled. However, my recovery was quick, arrangements were made anew, and the day of departure drew near. A few more drives, an interesting meeting with Mrs. Ethelreda Lewis, whose *Trader Horn* I had just been reading for the first time, and then we were obliged to say good-bye to all our new friends.

We were truly sorry to leave them and Johannesburg, especially as we felt there was so much more to be seen and done in that gay and up-to-date city. We envied the people who had lived there long enough to get used to the trying climate, and who all seemed as full of cheerful energy as if they lived in New York; in fact, it is easier to picture them transplanted to New York than any other English community I have known. One imagines they would adapt themselves well to the speed and intensity of life there, and the alertness and keenness of the American would be fully matched by their own.

Yet I can imagine also that parting from their

own city would mean a greater uprooting for them than for most people, for they appear to have a feeling for Johannesburg that, transcending mere civic pride, seems to make them and their city intimately one. I am sure that even the lights of New York could not dazzle them, nor the mammoth skyscrapers overshadow their tender memory of the mine dumps!

Much as we regretted the shortness of our stay in Johannesburg, it was pleasant to be in Capetown once more. We remained there a few weeks before returning to England. We lost no time in renewing our friendship with the Municipal Gardens—and found them even lovelier than we had remembered. Again we sauntered in the dappled shade of Government Avenue; grateful shade now, for it was definitely hotter than when we had left in May. We went for more drives amid the glorious scenery, and I spent carefree days bathing at Muizenberg.

On a dark wet winter day in London, it is of South Africa that I often think. "The Cape"! The very words conjure up pictures that create a longing: brilliant blue skies without a cloud; a noble

landscape; Table Mountain glowing plum colour in the sunset, and quiet gabled houses, their white walls alive with the dancing shadows of oak leaves. It all comes back to me as I write; again I see the sun-lit city, and hear the wail of the fish-horns echoing through the streets. I see the firs and the flaming cannas in the old garden at Kenilworth, and I feel that the beauty and glamour of South Africa will one day draw me back.

CHAPTER XXII

We left beautiful Capetown in the middle of December by the *Armadale Castle*, and so spent Christmas at sea. It was one of the jolliest Christmas Days I have ever had, and it was the nicest of all our voyages. Apart from joining in the usual deck games and dancing, I was also on the Sports Committee; but all the work I can remember doing was at the beginning when I went about badgering people for subscriptions. After that I attended meetings and enjoyed life generally, but I fear I wasn't in the least useful, and my pleasure at being on the committee must have been greater than that of my colleagues.

We anchored off Madeira shortly before seven on a warm sunny morning. We were the only passengers who were not travelling all the way to England, and I still recall the little scene of our departure—going off in the ship's launch, my hands

full of violets given me at the last moment, our South African friends of the voyage waving farewell to us from the deck. To the end South Africa did us well!

The arrival at Funchal is unforgettable. A picturesque quay, palms, and vivid parrots for sale; then cobbled streets and decorative mule and bullock *carros* to take you up the hills.

One's first impressions of Madeira are delightful, for it is all so pretty and quaint. But after one has bathed and played tennis and taken a few drives, one seems to have exhausted the resources of the island and the prettiness soon begins to pall. We met many people who had been there several weeks and who were feeling decidedly bored. Even the two fine Casinos were always half empty whenever we went in. I can quite believe that, for a resident, life in the little English colony might be very pleasant; but for the visitor a week in pretty but dull Madeira seems enough. No doubt many people will disagree with me, but that is how it struck us and others.

Madeira looks perhaps its best on New Year's Eve. Apart from the splendid display of fireworks, all the little houses put coloured candles in their

windows, and all over the island the red, white and green lights twinkle in the dark.

One evening I went on board a Blue Star liner to see a friend off to England. Our launch soon got mixed up in a crowd of bobbing boats piled high with wicker chairs; excited Portuguese salesmen shouted and gesticulated frenziedly among the paper streamers that floated from the ship's side. It was fun being obliged to hop from one to another of these boats, getting entangled in chairs and streamers, until we finally reached the ship's ladder and were helped on board by nice calm English sailors. When we left to return to Funchal, the moon was rising behind the dark hills, and the island looked most romantic.

While driving about Madeira, one sees tiny thatched cottages perched all the way up the hills, on the terraces of cultivated land. The villages are cobbled and have green shutters at their windows, and everywhere women and children sit at cottage doors doing their embroidery, even doing it while they walk. They all look very poor, but we saw no begging, such as there is in Lisbon and Estoril, where unemployed men and large-eyed children besiege one mournfully for pennies.

We had meant to stay three months in Madeira, but after a fortnight we made up our minds to return to England, in spite of its being still winter there. Wintry weather began almost as soon as we sailed in the *Arundel Castle*. All I remember of that trip is sitting in the reading room with an enthralling book that I didn't have time to finish and, between the rainstorms, battling my way up and down the deck in a cold and blustering wind. The miserable weather seemed somehow to emphasize the fact that this was the end of our travels. I realised acutely that America, Australia and South Africa lay thousands of miles away, with all the hospitality and good times that their names stood for to me, and for a while I felt distinctly "flat."

But that feeling soon passed, and one morning we stood on deck peering curiously through the grey mist of a raw drizzling day at the wet wharves of Southampton. It was about two years and a half since we had seen those same wet wharves from the deck of the *Scythia*, outward bound for New York, and in the interval we had seen a good deal of the world. Our return was brightened by telegrams from a few intimate friends, and we felt that after all it was good to be back in England. Through the

streaming windows of the train to London, I gazed with affection upon my sodden native soil.

It seemed strange in more ways than one to be in London again. After the long absence I found myself observing things that I had never noticed before, and analysing them instead of taking them for granted. I felt that I was seeing my own city as a foreigner must see it; with the same appraising vision, but with more love and understanding than can be expected from a stranger. It seems to me that this clear-sightedness is one of the greatest benefits to be had from travelling for, if it makes one realise the shortcomings of one's own country, it also gives one a far warmer appreciation of its good qualities.

It was about this time that I resolved always to try to return, whenever possible, some of the kindness I had met with abroad. It sounds a platitude to say so, but it is fatally easy, once in England again, to drop back into our ordinary casual way of receiving the stranger within our gates. Or rather, of not receiving him at all, but just letting him fend for himself. There is plenty of organised entertaining by various societies, but far from enough private hospitality, and as a rule our foreign

visitors have to depend too much on any compatriots in England whom they may chance to know.

Letters occasionally appear in the Press, in which the writers gratefully testify to the marvellous kindness they received while travelling in America or in one of the Dominions. For instance, the visitor from England finds that when invited to a house, his fellow-guests, though he may be meeting them for the first time, will hardly ever dream of parting from him without asking him to their own homes. The very fact that they have met him in the house of a mutual friend appears to be a strong enough claim on their own hospitality. Thus he is all the time making new friends, each of whom do their utmost to make his stay agreeable. On the other hand several people from America and the Dominions have confided to me that they "used to feel so lonely when they first came to England."

We no longer say: "'Ere's a foreigner—let's 'eave a brick at him!" But I have often heard it remarked with complacence: "Of course, we English are much too reserved to entertain strangers"; and I have felt that to make our famous "reserve" an excuse for inhospitality is to insult one of our finest and manliest national traits.

I am not suggesting that we should go out into the highways and by-passes to look for foreigners and invite them to dinner. But I do suggest that if we happen to meet visitors from America or the Empire, we should make the most of the opportunity, and try eagerly to find out what we can do for them, as they would do if the positions were reversed.

Of course there is also the other side of the picture, for many people unfortunately make bad travellers. Like fruit, they are at their best in their own countries! Many of us meeting a certain type of Englishman on the Continent, have been ashamed of the bad manners displayed by him in public places, and have inwardly prayed that he wouldn't be regarded as representative of our nation. And in spite of my readiness to love Americans, I have sometimes been chilled and disappointed by the manner some of them have adopted when in England, and especially when in Paris; a manner more in keeping with the boastfulness believed by many English people to be characteristic of all Americans —but which is so conspicuously absent when one has the pleasure of knowing them in their own land. As Mr. Philip Guedalla truly said in an article

in *The Times:* "Loose-tongued Crusaders are not infrequently the worst enemies of their own countrymen."

We are told that air travel can become a powerful agent for peace by gradually creating a better understanding among the peoples of the world. But the same can be said of all travel, whether by land, sea or air, if the traveller sets out in the right spirit. There can be few persons now who feel that contempt for other nations which was so vividly expressed by a lady I used to know. She began by remarking that she couldn't stand foreigners in English hotels, and when it was pointed out that if she went to another country she would automatically become a foreigner herself, she retorted with virtuous indignation: "*I* should never be *that!*"

But there are many people in every country who are still too rigid in their ideas, and who do not keep pace mentally with the advances made in mechanical transport. Though they may step nonchalantly into air liners, fancying themselves the last word in modernity, they take with them notions about the countries they are flying to that are as out-of-date as the stagecoach.

Yet everything combines to help us to the right

travel spirit. Our ships are superb, our aeroplanes are continually being improved, and even cargo conforms to new methods of packing and storage. The keynote of everything is enterprise and progress. It seems that only we, the passengers, often remain old-fashioned, encumbered by our prejudices as we speed across the world. Can't we cast them overboard, and fare forth with open minds? Then, if we may not, like the explorers of old, discover fresh lands, we may at least find new ideas, new meanings, and new friends beyond the frontiers.

I would give a great deal to be on my way once more—with the certainty of returning to England later. To be well on my way! To hear a ship's engines throbbing, and to see nothing for days on end but blue unbounded sea. To stand on deck early one morning watching a strange coastline grow gradually more distinct; then suddenly to realise that the engines have stopped and, thrilling to the Adventure of it all, to step ashore at a strange port.

THE END

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